1956

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART announces the continuation of programs (Series II and III, 6 programs each) of films from the *Collection of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library*, now on deposit at the San Francisco Museum of Art.

ADMISSION will be by SERIES TICKET: Prices (each series): General Public, $3.50; Museum Members, $2.00.

or

by SEASON TICKET: Good for ANY six programs, either Series.
Prices: General Public, $5.00; Museum Members, $2.50.

Tickets available in advance or on the evenings of the programs.
All programs will begin at 8:30 p.m. on Thursdays.

The original musical scores from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library will be used for piano accompaniment for the majority of the silent film programs in Series II and III.

Series I — THE FILM IN FRANCE

(This Series was shown Oct. 13 - Nov. 17, 1955)

Series II — THE FILM IN GERMANY

Jan. 12 Legend and Fantasy: **THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI** — Robert Wiene; **THE GOLEM** — Paul Wegener; and others.

Jan. 19 Legend and Fantasy: **THE LAST LAUGH** — with Emil Jannings; **HAMLET** — with Asta Nielsen.

Jan. 26 Legend and Fantasy: **VARIETY** — with Emil Jannings.

Feb. 2 The Advance Guard: **BERLIN, THE SYMPHONY OF A GREAT CITY** — Walter Ruttman; **ÜBERFALL** — Erno Metzner.

Feb. 9 Pabst and Realism: **THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY.**

Feb. 16 The Coming of Sound: **"M"** — Fritz Land, with Peter Lorre.

Series III — THE FILM IN AMERICA

Mar. 1 Comedies of Chaplin and Sennett: **THE TRAMP, POLICE, THE BANK** — Chaplin; **COMRADES, MABEL'S DRAMATIC CAREER, THE SURF GIRL** — Sennett.

Mar. 8 The Rise of the American Film: **A FOOL THERE WAS** — with Theda Bara; **THE NEW YORK HAT** — D. W. Griffith, with Mary Pickford; **A CORNER IN WHEAT** — D. W. Griffith.

Mar. 15 A Fairbanks Extravaganza: **THE BLACK PIRATE** — with Douglas Fairbanks.

Mar. 22 The Realm of Comedy: **THE FRESHMAN** — with Harold Lloyd; **THE SEX LIFE OF THE POLYP** — with Robert Benchley; **THE SKELETON DANCE** — Walt Disney; **HIS BITTER PILL** — Mack Sennett; **THE DOCTOR'S STREET** — George Melies; **GERTIE THE DINOSAUR** — Winsor McCay.

Mar. 29 The German Influence: **SUNRISE** — F. W. Murnau, with Janet Gaynor; **HANDS.**

Apr. 5 Late Slapstick: **MILLION DOLLAR LEGS** — Edward Cline with Jack Oakie and W. C. Fields.

The above and other film programs are available for rental. Catalogue on request.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART presents

Two special film Programs

ART IN CINEMA

A Memorial Evening for JEAN EPSTEIN

FRIDAY, MAY 13, 8:30 P.M.

ART IN CINEMA continues its review of creative personalities and techniques of the film by presenting a special memorial evening devoted to the work of the great French film director—JEAN EPSTEIN.

The special films obtained for this occasion include several from the Cinematheque Francaise in Paris.

CŒUR FIDELE (1923) The country fair sequence, an experiment in cinematic rhythms. (Excerpt.)

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER (1928) A successful film interpretation of the weird and sombre tale of Edgar Allen Poe. (Excerpt.)

FINIS TERRAE (1929-30) A drama of the sea in which the players are the people who actually experienced the episode. Entire film to be shown.

LE TEMPESTAIRE (1947) This film is a poem of water, earth, and wind inspired by the shores of Brittany. (Excerpt.)

SPEAKER: **MICHEL DUMONT,** member of the Staff of French Consulate General, will describe the contributions of Jean Epstein to the art of the film.

Note: This special program has been arranged in cooperation with the GROUP FOR FILM STUDY, 3951 Gouverneur Avenue, New York 63, New York.

Subscription to **THE EPSTEIN MEMORIAL EVENING:**
(See blank at bottom of page for instructions on obtaining tickets.)

Museum Members $1.00
Non-members $1.25

Selected Film Classics from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS AT 8:30 P.M.

The San Francisco Museum of Art, as the West Coast Depository for the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, presents a selection of film classics from its collection. This series will be the first of periodic showings of these rarely seen films.

May 18 **BROKEN BLOSSOMS (1919)** Produced, directed and written by D. W. Griffith, with Lillian Gish, Richard Barthelmess and Donald Crisp. Thomas Burke's Limehouse tale treated as an essay in light and shade and hysteria.

May 25 **THE MARK OF ZORRO (1920)** Directed by Fred Niblo, and starring Douglas Fairbanks with Marguerite de la Motte, and Noah Beery. The story of a masked bandit in the American Southwest; the star at his best and most exhilarating.

June 8 **FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE (1921)** Directed by Rex Ingram, with Rudolph Valentino and Alice Terry. This celebrated war-film romance established the reputations of both its star and its director.

June 15 **THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT (1927)** Directed by René Clair with Albert Préjean. A 19th century farce deftly turned into a period film comedy.

ADMISSION BY SERIES TICKET ONLY

Museum Members $1.00*
Non-Members $4.00

*This special benefit to Members is made possible by the Museum's operation of the West Coast Depository of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.

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Please send me _____ tickets for EPSTEIN MEMORIAL EVENING (Friday, May 13, at 8:30 p.m.)

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THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA

A MEMORIAL EVENING FOR JEAN EPSTEIN

Friday, May 13, 1955

Speaker: MICHEL DUMONT of the French Consulate General Staff.

COUER FIDELE
THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER
(Intermission: 10 minutes)
FINIS TERRAE
LE TEMPESTAIRE

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Program Notes

JEAN EPSTEIN was born on March 25, 1897, in Warsaw, Poland, of a French father and a Polish mother. From 1914 to 1920 he studied medicine in France, at Lyons. It was there that he met Auguste Lumiere. The medical student, in his enthusiasm for letters and the arts, interrupted his scientific studies and began his literary career. From 1920 to 1922 he published his first books. "Bonjour, Cinema", a collection of notes and poems, gave praise to the screen. He then assisted Louis Delluc in shooting LE TONNERE and a short time later met Jean Benoit-Levy who proposed that he make PASTEUR with him. This was his first film. In 1923 he was engaged by Pathe-Consorium Cinema as director, and it was for this company that he produced, immediately after "L'Auberge Rouge", (The Red Inn), of Balzac, another script, this time an original one, his famous COEUR FIDELE. Rene Clair has said: "...every person wishing to become acquainted with the resources of present-day motion pictures must see COEUR FIDELE."

Epstein's life work can be divided approximately into three periods, and films for this presentation have been chosen to represent these periods.

I	1922-1927	Beginnings: The most representative of this period is the "country fair" sequence from COEUR FIDELE.
II	1928-1929	Maturity: The burial sequence from HOUSE OF USHER.
III	1930-1935	"Les Marines": The extraordinary "seascapes" best express this period.

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER dominated the whole of the second period: Jean Epstein, having founded his own producing group, was able to bring into being this subject which had been haunting him for a long time. What captivated him in the tales of Edgar Allan Poe was their poetic charm much more than their morbidity. "All these dead persons," he used to say, "are only slightly dead. Madeline and Roderick feel that they are going to die, just as we feel sleep overcoming us."

In that same year, 1928, Jean Epstein went on to a totally different genre. FINIS TERRAE marks his first encounter with the sea - which was to exert an influence on the third and last period of his career. He turned away from all that is conventional, even in the slightest degree. He preferred the rough fisher-folk to actors, and gave them a very simple story, which had really taken place among them, to interpret, and which they could readily re-live before a camera. In his "The Approaches To Truth" (an article appearing in "Photo-Cine" November-December, 1928, Paris) Epstein said: "I have sought to obtain the dramatic illusion by proceeding, in some fashion, against the grain, by bestowing upon an existing reality the more general characteristics of fiction. I sought to make truth appear fictional. FINIS TERRAE seeks to be a psychological documentary, the reproduction of a brief drama composed of episodes which have taken place, of authentic men and things."

Shortly after the war, in 1947, he returned to Brittany, and produced LE TEMPESTAIRE. In an unpublished manuscript, "Sound in Slow Motion", Epstein said: "...it seems necessary to ascertain what contribution slow motion, which increasingly enriches the visual world with aspects hitherto unseen, could make to the sound track. I put this problem, from the technical point of view, to Leon Vareille, an acoustical engineer, who became interested in it and solved it, as the mathematicians say, with simplicity and ease. Thus, throughout TEMPESTAIRE, I was able to use the sounds of wind and sea at speeds varying as much as one-fourth

(over)

from normal...Sonic slow motion makes possible the analysis of complex noises... the ear needs sound to be enlarged in time, i.e., sonic slow motion, in order to discover, for instance, that the confused howling of a tempest, is, in a subtler reality, a manifold of distinct noises hitherto alien to the human ear, an apocalypse of shouts, coos, gurgles, squalls, detonations, timbres and accents for the most part as yet unnamed."

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1923 COEUR FIDELE (THE FAITHFUL HEART)
Written and directed by Jean Epstein. Camera: Paul Guichard, assisted by Stuckert and Leon Donnot.
Interior sets at the Pathe Studio in Vincennes. Exterior in Marseilles.
Produced and distributed by Pathe-Consortium Cinema.

1928 LA CHUTE DE LA MAISON USHER (THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER)
Adapted from Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Oval Portrait". A film by Jean Epstein. Assistant: Luis Bunuel. Camera: George Lucas, assisted by Jean Lucas. Sets designed by Pierre Kefer. Costumes designed by Oclise. Interiors at Studio Menchen at Epinay. Exteriors at Magny-en-Vexin, at the swamps of Sologne and on the Breton coast. Cast: Roderick Usher - Jean Debucourt, Madeline Usher - Marguerite Abel-Gance, the guest - Charles Lamy. Produced by Jean Epstein Films.

1928-29 FINIS-TERRAE
A neo-realist film by Jean Epstein. "Acted" by the sea-weed collectors and fishermen of the islets in the Ouessantin archipelago. Camera: Joseph Barth and Joseph Kottula, assisted by Louis Nee and Raymond Tulle. Photographed on the islands of Bannec, Balanec, Ile d'Ouessant and on the sea near Iroise. With the inhabitants of the islands and the crews of the "Pampero" and the "Hermine". Produced by Societe Generale des Films.

1947 LE TEMPESTAIRE (THE STORM)
A film by Jean Epstein. "Acted" by fishermen and lighthouse keepers on the island of Belle-Ile-en-Mer. Camera: A. S. Militon, assisted by Schneider. Score by Yves Baudrier. Produced by Filmagazine.
A legend of the sea. First use of "slow-motion sound".

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Notes on the Speaker

MICHEL DUMONT, Press Counselor to the French Consulates in San Francisco and Los Angeles, was born in Paris and graduated from the University of Paris. In 1940 he joined the Free French Forces of General de Gaulle and later was assigned to the French Delegation in Mexico. He has served in turn in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the French National Committee in London, as a member of General Catroux' Mission in North Africa, and as Associate Press Director of the Provisional Government of the French Republic. Before coming to San Francisco, he was Director of the Press and Information Service of the French Embassy in Canada, later joining the staff of the French Embassy of the United States in the same capacity.

We are most honored to have Mr. Dumont with us tonight, and we wish to thank him for his kind cooperation in helping us present this Memorial Evening for Jean Epstein.

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This program has been arranged in cooperation with the GROUP FOR FILM STUDY, 3951 Gouverneur Avenue, New York 63, New York. We wish to extend our thanks to this group for their service to us, for the preparation of the Memorial Booklet, and for obtaining the films, COEUR FIDELE and FINIS TERRAE from the Cinematheque Francaise in Paris.

Records for this program courtesy of Record Department, W. & J. Sloane, 216 Sutter Street, San Francisco.

SELECTED FILM CLASSICS FROM THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY

San Francisco Museum of Art
Program Notes—May 18, 1955

BROKEN BLOSSOMS (1919)

Produced by D. W. Griffith, Direction and scenario by D. W. Griffith, Photography by G. W. Bitzer and Hendrik Sartov. Cast: Lillian Gish as Lucy; Richard Barthelmess as The Yellow Man, Donald Crisp as Battling Burrows.

"Broken Blossoms" was the first picture that D. W. Griffith made for United Artists (a company that he founded in partnership with Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford) and it was his last cinematic achievement. This film was produced at the eclipse of his career; however, it embodies all of the qualities of Griffith as the first motion picture director worthy of being called an artist.

David Wark Griffith was born of an impoverished family in Kentucky in 1875. His father was a colonel in the Confederate Army and in his youth, Griffith was inculcated with Southern prejudices and Victorian sentiments that he never outgrew. Initially Griffith had the desire to become a great writer. He was told by a friend that acting experience was a necessary preliminary to writing; therefore, in 1897, he joined a stock company in Louisville. At this time he used the name of Lawrence Griffith, and he told his wife that his real name was David Wark, but that he would only use it when he became famous. Less than twenty years later, he was famous and began to use his given name.

Development (1907-1914)

Griffith's screen career began by accident in 1907. When he was out of work during the spring and summer slack months of the theatrical season, a friend advised him to apply for work at the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company, one of the first film factories in New York. He did apply and discovered that he could earn $5.00 for acting and $10.00 to $15.00 for story suggestions. Despite the fact that one of his plays, "A Fool and a Girl" had been produced on the stage in Washington, D. C., he switched careers and began to concentrate on films. His first notable film achievement was his lead in Edwin S. Porter's "Rescued From An Eagle's Nest". In 1908, he directed his first film for Biograph, "The Adventures of Dolly". Later in the year he signed a contract with Biograph as a director; he agreed to direct one long and one short film per week for the salary of $50 a week plus royalties. From this time, Griffith was completely engaged in film production. He continued to produce one reel films which were typical grist for the production mill of the film factories of that day. However, despite his adherence to the production schedule, he was able to take a serious interest in the film medium and began to invent new techniques that furthered the expressive and creative potentialties of the medium.

Many of the accepted film techniques of the present day can be traced in origin to the films of D. W. Griffith. He developed mobility of the camera. In order to get immediacy of feeling, he moved the camera in for close-ups. Although there had been no logical reason for it, most films had been made as though all action took place on a proscenium-type stage. In order to obtain special effects, he experimented with

lighting despite the objections of his cameramen. Because he had been both an actor and a playwright, he understood and appreciated good acting. Therefore, he insisted on finding good actors for his films and consequently raised the standard of acting to be demanded of all screen performers.

In 1913, he produced "Judith of Bethulia", a film which revolutionized the American film industry. Previous to this time, all American films had been extremely short. A longer Italian film, "Quo Vadis", reached the American market, but still did not change the pattern. It was only when Griffith made "Judith of Bethulia" as a four-reeler that the American filmmakers began to accept the necessity for making longer films. With his insistence on a four-reeler, Griffith lifted the film out of the novelty class and established it as an entertainment medium in its own right. In the space of seven years, Griffith had served his apprenticeship, learned his craft, and made his own notable contributions.

Maturity (1914-1917)

During this period, Griffith produced his two greatest films, "The Birth of a Nation" (1915) and "Intolerance" (1916). These two films stand as outstanding achievements in the history of the motion picture in America; they surpassed all other American films of the time in structure, imagination and content. They also established Griffith as the first great American director and artist of the film. When it was completed in 1915, "The Birth of a Nation", was the longest American film yet made - 12 reels. At its premiere in New York, audiences paid the phenomenal price of $2.00 per seat. It has enjoyed such extended popularity that it is still one of the greatest money-makers in the history of the American film. Its success was universal. It was shown at the White House, and President Wilson remarked, "It is like writing history with lightning". Following his bent toward sentiment, his first great film was an epic of American history; his second great film "Intolerance" was devoted to the story of how "hatred and intolerance through the ages have battled against love and charity". Although its theme may have been profound, "Intolerance" is important because of its formal organization. Griffith expanded his cutting into more complex patterns and told four stories simultaneously. His techniques of editing later had a great impact on the Soviet school of directors.

Decline (after 1918)

Success seemed to go to his head. Rather than pursue the altruistic motives of his youth, Griffith became increasingly eager for wealth and was willing to compromise his integrity in order to obtain it. His films after 1918 testify to this fact. He had learned his craft in the days of the small film industry. After World War I, the film industry suddenly blossomed forth as corporate enterprise. Griffith had a hard time making an adjustment to the new conditions. In order to protect themselves from the new business giants of the film world, four leading Hollywood figures, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and D. W. Griffith, joined to form a producing-distributing company, United Artists Corporation. While this new arrangement seemed to be an improvement for Griffith, it actually turned out to be a hinderance. He fell into the habit of working for the box office, and thereafter all of his efforts were directed toward making pictures on a strictly business basis. After 1919, he made a good number of films and he became famous and made a great deal of money, but he never made any films of merit. His last film of consequence was "Broken Blossoms" in 1919.

SELECTED FILM CLASSICS FROM THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY

San Francisco Museumof Art
Program Notes - May 25, 1955

THE MARK OF ZORRO (1920)

Produced by Fairbanks-United Artists. Directed by Fred Niblo. Adapted by Douglas Fairbanks from "The Curse of Capistrano" by Johnston McCulley. Coast: Senor Zorro and Don Diego Vega: Douglas Fairbanks; Lolita:Marguerite de la Motte; Sargeant Pedro: Noah Berry; Captain Juan Ramon: Robert McKim; Don Carlos Pulido: Charles Hill Mailes; Dona Catalina: Claire McDowell; Don Alejandro: Sydney de Gray; Governor Alvarado: George Pertolat; Fray Felipe: Walt Whitman.

Douglas Fairbanks was one of the great American screen personalities of the 1920's. if not of all times. Although it has been nearly thirty years since Fairbanks was at the height of his career, the legend of his magnitude has grown rather than diminished as the years have passed. There is no question about the fact that he was not a great actor; however, there was something special about the way in which he animated the screen that has never been equalled.

Today, we are accustomed to the "great film stars" and the "idols of millions", who are manufactured in Hollywood publicity mills. Actually Douglas Fairbanks was one of the first manufactured screen idols. He arrived on the Hollywood scene when the industry was expanding and needed devices to attract mass audiences to new movie palaces. Thus, a swash-buckling, romantic acrobat such as Douglas Fairbanks was a wonderful vehicle to be used to increase box office receipts.

The life of Douglas Fairbanks is a consistent story of adventure from start to finish, and the personality which emerged on the screen is very much a mirror of the man himself. He was born in Denver, Colorado in 1883. His father was a New York lawyer whom his mother divorced shortly after Douglas was born. He spent his youth in Denver. It is known that he was interested in Shakespeare and this may have lead him to an interest in the theater. In 1900, when his family left Denver to return East, he left high school to take a job on the stage. He was able to get a minor role with a road company. In 1901, we know that he attended Harvard College for approximately five months. Next, he took a cattle-boat to Europe and "bummed" his way through England and Belgium. After this he became a clerk for a Wall Street brokerage house. Then in 1902, he returned to the theater and made his first appearance on Broadway. For the next twelve years, he continued to play in both Broadway and road company productions, establishing himself as a light comedian with a modest reputation.

His screen career began in 1915. This was shortly after the motion picture companies began to move to Hollywood. They were searching for more professional acting talent and came to Broadway as a source. In the spring of 1915, Harry Aitken of the Triangle Corporation invited Fairbanks to come to Hollywood to play in "The Lamb". D. W. Griffith was associated with the Triangle Corporation and was supervising production of "The Lamb". The great director and the embryonic screen personality did not seem to have a successful first encounter. Griffith was not very enthusiastic about Fairbanks' humor or acrobatics. Therefore, he suggested that he go into the Keystone comedies where he could skip and jump to his heart's content.

However, within the next four years, Griffith was to see that he had been wrong. Fairbanks' first film, "The Lamb", got favorable press reviews and was successful at the box office. So, Douglas Fairbanks gave up his stage career and moved to Hollywood. During the next year, he made eleven films, one quarter of his total. At the same time, he began to work with Anita Loos, a teen-aged scriptwriter, and John Emerson, the director. The three formed a team that produced successful films. At the end of 1916, they established their own company. By 1919, Douglas Fairbanks' reputation had skyrocketed and he had become the first "idol of millions". By this time, D. W. Griffith had acknowledged his initial error in evaluating Fairbanks. He joined Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and Charlie Chaplin in partnership to form the United Artists Corporation.

Most of Fairbanks early films were standard in form; they were melodramas colored with acrobatics. The plot was always the same; there was the hero, the heroine and the villain. It was possible to repeat this formula by simply altering the people, scene and time. Douglas Fairbanks' films were not popular because of the plot or the quality of acting; they were popular because of him. There was something unique about his graceful movements that were extremely exciting to see on the silent screen. He was a great showman; he knew how to make the most out of the simplest gestures, such as raising his cape, drawing his sword, or mounting his horse. Primarily an acrobat of great talent, he was not an actor; he was totally unable to put any drama into his gestures or emotion into his expressions.

"The Mark of Zorro", which was made in 1920, in cooperation with United Artists, is a typical example of Fairbanks at the height of his swash-buckling career. The following evaluation of this film is given in FILM NOTES, which have been prepared by the Museum of Modern Art to accompany the showing of these films.

"The reputation of this unpretentious and exciting film has been growing steadily since its first showing, when the critics were slightly puzzled by Fairbanks" sudden desertion of his urban Yankee role. "Doug" playing anyone other than himself (even, as here, in jest) was a baffling experience. It had been a long time since THE LAMB, and THE MARK OF ZORRO is a repeat performance of it in the sense that Fairbanks played a weary dude with almost dangerous truth, as a build-up to the joke of his actual virility. Yet this shuttling between opposites, between initiative and lassitude, between the humdrum and the heroic, is implied (though never so concretely demonstrated as here) in almost everything Fairbanks did and is the chief trick of his comedy technique. In his previous movies, everybody else represents the humdrum world and Fairbanks the release into heroics. In this film, he plays his own stooge."

(Film Notes is available for reference in the Museum Library and sells for $.60 at the Museum Bookshop)

Douglas Fairbanks career did not end in 1920, but it began to change thereafter. "The Mark of Zorro" was his first costume picture; it seemed to set a precedent for future films which became grandiose costume pieces. He also began to lose interest in performing on the screen and developed more enthusiasm for producing. His "Robin Hood" of 1922, was typical of such ventures. For it he constructed one of the largest sets in American film history. Douglas Fairbanks seemed to have suffered from the rise of the film industry as a corporate enterprise in much the way as D. W. Griffith did. Both Griffith and Fairbanks became businessmen; they neglected their talents in order to keep pace with the demand for greater and greater film spectacles.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART
presents
FILMS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY

Series I
THE FILM IN FRANCE

October 13, 1955

THE SMILING MADAME BEUDET.....Germaine Dulac
BALLET MECANIQUE.....Fernand Léger
ENTR'ACTE.....René Clair
MENILMONTANT.....Dmitri Kirsanov

Program Notes

These films, important from an historical point of view, are equally important for the development of the film as an art form. Comments from the Museum of Modern Art "Film Notes" are supplemented here by notes from former ART IN CINEMA programs. They are signed F. S. and emphasize creative and aesthetic qualities in the films.

'By 1914 a critical approach to the film in France, and an emphasis on the advance-guard film, had both been determined in part by men from outside the cinema - men able to extend their enthusiasm for what was new and untraditional in the older arts to include a special interest in the new art of the cinema. In France, if nowhere else, the aesthetes exercised a real influence on the film, and the cinema very early became a field to which young men of promise might unashamedly turn for self-expression."("Film Notes", MMA)

'These examples of the early French Avantgarde pointed in every direction except that taken by the commercial film or "turnip" as they were dubbed by the avantgardists. While some concentrated on telling a story in visual images - removing the film still further from techniques of the stage or the novel - others dispensed with the story entirely and created compositions of pure form and movement."(F.S.)

THE SMILING MADAME BEUDET (1922) Directed by Germaine Dulac. Photography by A. Morrin. "Madame Dulac was already an experienced director when, in collaboration with Louis Delluc, she made LA FETE ESPAGNOLE in 1919. Delluc exercised considerable influence on the development of the French film after the war, both as a director and through the medium of his books and his original scenarios. He fathered a whole succession of psychological screen-dramas, of which this is an early example. Madame Dulac's direction of the film is both sensitive and bold. If her use of slow-motion photography and trick-work is somewhat excessive, nevertheless she succeeded with what was, at the time, signal originality in expressing by pictorial means the atmosphere and implications of Andre Obey's study of domestic conflicts." ("Film Notes", MMA)

'This film is more interesting as a precursor of Madame Dulac's later work (THE SEA-SHELL AND THE CLERGYMAN) than as a good example of the Avantgarde. It uses the camera to present the psychological factors involved in a domestic conflict."(F. S.)

BALLET MECANIQUE (1924) Produced and directed by Fernand Leger. "Among modern painters who at various times have been attracted to the film as a medium for expression are Leopold Survage (1912-14), Viking Eggeling (1919-20), Francis Picabia, who wrote the scenario of René Clair's ENTR'ACTE (1924), and Fernand Léger. Whereas Survage had designed, and Eggeling had both designed and executed film cartoons of purely abstract designs, BALLET MECANIQUE employs a minimum of drawn or painted geometrical forms and a preponderant amount of photographic images. Even in the repeated scenes of the woman mounting the steps, it nevertheless remains abstract, since the human figure is used exactly like the saucepan-lids and eggbeaters, as an object in motion in a rhythmical composition." ("Film Notes", MMA)

'Fernand Leger was among the first painters to attempt an investigation of the cinema's spatial and rhythmic possibilities from the standpoint of his own individual problems on canvas and an extension of these problems into the realm of time and movement...His cinema aesthetic saw that the film is essentially a photograph of reality in motion - the real objects that he used as a basis for his structures on canvas.

'Leger wrote: "The War had thrust me, as a soldier, into the heart of a mechanical atmosphere. Here I discovered the beauty of the fragment. I sensed a new reality in the detail of a machine, in the common object. I tried to find the plastic value of these fragments of our common life. I rediscovered them on the screen in the

(cont)

close-ups of objects which impressed and influenced me. However, I felt that one could make their impression much stronger. In 1923, I decided to 'frame' the beauty of this undiscovered world in the film. In this medium I worked as I had done before in painting. To create the rhythm of common objects in space and time, to present them in their plastic beauty, this seemed to me worthwhile. This was the origin of my BALLET MECANIQUE."

"The film was photographed by a young American photographer, Dudley Murphy, and there is also some ground for claim of Man Ray's participation. The music, composed for the pianola, was by another young American, known at that time in musical circles as "L'Enfant Terrible" - George Antheil. According to Antheil's memoirs, his own sonata for piano called "Mechanism" (presented at the Champs Elysees Theatre on October 4, 1923, as a prelude to the Swedish Ballet) had inspired Leger to begin his film. Antheil's composition for Leger, his "Ballet Mécanique", was apparently never further used in conjunction with the film after its first showings in Paris. Since so much of a collaboration existed in the conception of the film and its accompaniment, we might well wish for better knowledge of Antheil's music score.

"Besides its use as an experiment for Léger, the painter, the film has taken its place in the history of the avant-garde cinema. And for those who do not look only for Léger's own problems and their solutions, of plastic organization in space, volume, light, movement, and time, it will remain a film to be interpreted psychologically - as such films invariably are - with conviction that the charwoman in the film mounting the steps fifteen times is "an impression of the labors of Sisyphus in a mechanical and cruelly repetitious destiny." On the contrary, with reference to Léger's own note about the film, the charwoman is used exactly like the saucepan-lids, as an object in motion in a rhythmical composition." (F. S.)

ENTR'ACTE (1924) Directed by René Clair from a scenario by Francis Picabia. "With Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie, Jean Borlin. Commissioned by the Ballet Suedois de Golf Mare. René Clair ranks with Griffith, Chaplin and Eisenstein, as one of the few men of authentic genius produced by the cinema. He began as a member of the Avant-garde movement and this, his second Avant-garde film, is pure cinema. In it, the mockery of the Dadaists is fused with Clair's keen wit and unerring filmic instinct to create a droll mood that could exist nowhere but on a strip of moving celluloid." (F.S.)

MENILMONTANT (1925) Produced and directed by Dmitri Kirsanov. "Photography by Leonce Crouan and Dmitri Kirsanov. Made at a minimum of expense and with poor equipment by a young Russian emigre who had previously been a violinist in a movie theatre in Paris, this is one of the most remarkable of amateur films. Kirsanov's direction generally, his use of poetic imagery, his free cutting and - above all - the performance of Nadia Sibirskaya in the main role, entitle the picture to all the praise it elicited from European critics." ("Film Notes", MMA)

Musical accompaniment by Mrs. William Corbett Jones playing original Museum of Modern Art Film Library scores.

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Series I
THE FILM IN FRANCE

October 20, 1955

RIEN QUE LES HEURES.....Alberto Cavalcanti
THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER....Jean Epstein

Program Notes

RIEN QUE LES HEURES (1926) Directed by Alberto Cavalcanti. Photographed by Jimmy Rogers. Design by M. Mirovitch. Produced by Nero Films. "The documentary film came into its own around 1930-31. Before that, films of fact consisted either of newsreels or the sentimental, remote, idyllic treatment of factual material --NANOOK OF THE NORTH, MOANA, etc. Filmakers were unable to see the realms of creative possibilities in the ordinary facets of life around them. RIEN QUE LES HEURES was the first film to attempt a utilization of this material.

"This film was shot in four weeks at a cost of 25,000 francs. Although it may seem clumsy and passé to make such obvious comparisons between the patent leather shoes of the rich and the cats crawling in the garbage cans, still it must be remembered that this was the first attempt at an unbiased cross-section of 24 houres in the life of a city. It broke fresh ground, and in it were sown the seeds of all succeeding city-documentaries." (F.S.)

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER (1928) Directed by Jean Epstein from the tale by Edgar Allan Poe. Photography by Lucas. With Margaret Gance as Lady Madeline Usher, Jean Dubencourt as Sir Roderick Usher, and Charles Lamay as the visitor. Jean Epstein was born on March 25, 1897, in Warsaw, Poland, of a French father and a Polish mother. From 1914 to 1920 he studied medicine in France, at Lyons. It was there that he met Auguste Lumière. The medical student, in his enthusiasm for letters and the arts, interrupted his scientific studies and began his literary career. From 1920 to 1922 he published his first books. "Bonjour, Cinema", a collection of notes and poems, gave praise to the screen. He then assisted Louis Delluc in shooting LE TONNERE and a short time later met Jean Benoit-Levy who proposed that he make PASTEUR with him. This was his first film. In 1923 he was engaged by Pathé-Consorium Cinema as director, and it was for this company that he produced, immediately after L'AUBERGE ROUGE,(THE RED INN), of Balzac, another script, this time an original one, his famous COEUR FIDELE. René Clair has said: "...every person wishing to become acquainted with the resources of present-day motion pictures must see COEUR FIDELE."

Epstein's life work can be divided approximately into three periods:

I	1922-1927	Beginnings: The most representative of this period is the "country fair" sequence from COEUR FIDELE.
II	1928-1929	Maturity: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER.
III	1930-1935	"Les Marines": The extraordinary "seascapes", LE TEMPESTAIRE and FINIS-TERRAE, best express this period.

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER dominated the whole of the second period: Jean Epstein, having founded his own producing group, was able to bring into being this subject which had been haunting him for a long time. What captivated him in the tales of Edgar Allan Poe was their poetic charm much more than their morbidity. "All these dead persons," he used to say, "are only slightly dead. Madeline and Roderick feel that they are going to die, just as we feel sleep overcoming us."

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"The narrator - an old friend - has been invited to the House of Usher to keep Sir Roderick company, to cheer him and help alleviate the woes that beset him - the approaching death of his beloved sister, Lady Madeline, his own mysterious nervous malady, and the weighing consciousness that he, Sir Roderick, is the last of the Usher lineage.

(continued)

'We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempts at cheering a mind from which darkness... poured forth upon all objects...in one unceasing radiation of gloom.' (THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER).

"Poe's genius is literary, and the translating of a classic from its original ground into another medium usually adds nothing to the final result, and something less to the original classic. The halation of mysterious fantasy which is characteristic of the 'Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque' is so personal to Poe, to the subject matter, and to the structure of the writing, that it evaporates when rendered into another medium. One may succeed in creating a like mood of mystery and fantasy, but it will not be Poe's. -- This version of one of his most famous tales succeeds better than most. With a fine use of slow-motion photography, with much burning of candles, dripping of wax and billowing of drapes, we are made aware of a wild romantic beauty rarely seen in the film medium. The characteristically French shots of bare trees against soggy skies, of dripping Provence landscapes take on the quality of lithographs. The interiors seem lighted by candles alone. The exterior model shots of the house, however, tend to depreciate the convincing interiors.

"Epstein has taken certain liberties with the original story. The theme of another Poe tale - 'The Oval Portrait' - has been added, as well as a suggestion of "The Pit and The Pendulum' and 'Ligeia'. But no matter. Here it has been done solely to heighten the macabre quality of the name 'Roderick Usher' and not to flatter a popular conception." (F.S.)

Those comments initialed F.S. are taken from the ART IN CINEMA program notes.

Musical accompaniment by Raylene Pierce playing original Museum of Modern Art Film Library scores.

T H E S A N F R A N C I S C O M U S E U M O F A R T
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Series I
THE FILM IN FRANCE

November 2, 1955

THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT.....René Clair

Program Notes

THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT (1927) Produced by Albatros. Directed by René Clair, from the play by Eugene Labiche and Marc Michel. Photography by Nicholas Roudakoff and Maurice Desfassiaux. Design by Lazare Meerson. Cast: The Bridegroom: Albert Préjean; The Bride: Marise Maia; The Officer: Vital Geymond; The Married Woman: Olga Tschekowa; The Bride's Uncle: Paul Ollivier; The Husband: Jim Gerald; The Bride's Father: Yvonneck; The Aunt: Alice Tissot; The Man with the Necktie: Bondi; The Man with the Glove: Pré fils; The Valet: Alexandrov; The Customer: Valentine Tessier; The Mayor: Volbert.

"When Henri Bergson selected UN CHAPEAU DE PAILLE D'ITALIE to illustrate his theory of the comic in situations, he referred to a light comedy of the 19th century which for a variety of reasons enjoyed unusual vitality. Since its initial appearance in 1851, the play has been a standby of professional and amateur alike: its last notable revival in this country was in 1936, when Orson Welles staged it for the Federal Theatre Project as HORSE EATS HAT.

"For René Clair, however, the Labiche comedy had a particular appeal. It was not so much that its irreverence delighted him, or its unflagging pace, or its sharply delineated characters. Clair had already clamored for a return to the primitive in films. In THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT he was able to make a picture staged and costumed in the period of the cinema's birth which even looked as though it had actually been filmed in 1895. Studio-produced though most of the exteriors are, scene after scene painstakingly and brilliantly captures the very atmosphere and flavor of pictures taken thirty years earlier, when the Lumière employees walked out of their factory at lunch-time and were eternally caught and recorded by the motion picture in a sunlit moment of time. Here the casual pedestrians and onlookers, who are seen watching the harrassed bridal party arrive or depart from City Hall or home, seem to have stepped straight out of older films, while even the ubiquitous dogs which strayed into almost all early productions now put in a faithful appearance again. There is more than a glimpse of Madame Lumière's bodice; and many a hint of old Zecca's FUN AFTER THE WEDDING.

"For the admirable scenic design and costumes credit must be given to the late Lazare Meerson (Clair, like Chaplin, is content with the simplest and cheapest sets so long as they get their point across). Credit, too, belongs to a new influence in French films generally, that of the emigré Russians. Clair had made his film debut in Protazanov's Le SENS DE LA MORT. Now in another member of the Russian colony he met a sympathetic producer - Alexander Kamenka, who gave not only Clair but Jean Renoir, Marcel L'Herbier and Jacques Feyder opportunities for free experiments in film making.

"THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT is a pyramid of situations, a concatenation of exquisitely pointed characters in absurd conjunction. Out of this foolproof material the director makes an inspired best, sticking to the play's substance for the most part, but light-heartedly changing it to fit the new medium where proper - as in the dream-like sequence, so prophetic of a similar sequence in the Bunuel-Dali L'AGE D'OR, where the hero in the midst of the nuptial ceremony imagines the destruction being wrought on his apartment by the irascible lover of the lady with the ruined hat. The acting is incomparable, the points are taken exactly right. Even if the subtitles were omitted or written in Bantu, the meaning would still be perfectly clear - there is no mistaking the incident with the child at the piano, or aunt's opinion of her husband, or M. Beaupherthuis' grave but unprovable doubts at the end of the day. This is universal, this is human nature at its most endearing and funniest, and if, as the story goes, the French bourgeoisie rose in rage when the picture was first released - with the result that Clair got no further opportunity to direct a film for a long while - it can only have been because they had forgotten their Molière, not to mention their Labiche." ("Film Notes", MMA)

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René Clair was born in Paris on November 11, 1898. His family name was Chomette, but he adopted the pseudonym of Clair. In his youth he was primarily interested in literature - poetry in particular. From 1919-1921, he was a journalist, writing for the Parisian newspaper, "L'Intransigeant". His film career began by accident in 1921, when he obtained a minor part as an actor. However, this did not eliminate his literary career immediately, He continued to write novels and essays, and one of his novels was published as late as 1926. After his debut as an actor, he succeeded in obtaining other parts, working for Protazanor, a Russian emigré, and later Louis Feuillade. Next he was made assistant director to Baroncelli, the veteran French director, and this formally lauched his career as a director.

In 1923, Clair completed PARIS QUI DORT, or THE CRAZY RAY, which is an example of his undeveloped style. Despite its amateurish quality, the film indicates an important characteristic of his mature style - his wish to return to the playfulness, movement and fantasy of the films of Méliès and Zecca.

In 1924, he made ENTR'ACTE, which was commissioned by the Swedish Ballet. This film was an outstanding achievement in its day, and still stands among the most important experimental films. The script was written by Francis Picabia, a "dada" artist , and the music was by the modern composer, Erik Satie.

In 1925 and 1926, he made several films, none of which rank with his best. In 1927, he made THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT, which many critics consider his finest film. With this film, it is obvious that he has reached his maturity, and that he has combined satire, comedy, sentiment, and fantasy to produce a remarkably satisfying film. In 1931, he completed his first important sound film, LE MILLION. Like THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT, it was a situation comedy in which events are more important than people. He continued to make films in Franch during the 1930's: his most notable film of this period was A NOUS LA LIBERTE.

In 1940, René Clair came to Hollywood, where he remained until 1946. His most remembered film of this period is probably the riotous I MARRIED A WITCH. However his attitude to filmmaking was entirely the antithesis of the Hollywood method. Clair does not believe that a film should be the product of an industry. He believes that it should be created by one man's constant control and supervision.

In 1952 his BELLES DE NUITS won the Grand Prize at the Venice International Film Festival.

Musical accompaniment by Raylene Pierce playing original Museum of Modern Art Film Library scores.

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Series I
THE FILM IN FRANCE

November 10, 1955

THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC.....Carl-Theodor Dreyer

Program Notes

"Among the many silent pictures to appear while sound films were already being introduced, THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC is of particular interest. It is at once a culmination of many silent techniques or experiments, and a portent of the talking picture. It almost talks. Again and again, the camera turns to Joan as she is about to answer her inquisitors and catches the form of a "Oui," of a 'Ma mère' on her lips, so that the visual sensation seems to translate itself into an aural one." ("Film Notes," MMA)

THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC (1928) Produced by La Société Générale de Films and L'Alliance Cinématographique Européene. Directed by Carl-Theodor Dreyer. Scenario by Dreyer in collaboration with Joseph Delteil, based upon the trail record. Photography by Rudolph Maté. Sets and costumes designed by Jean Victor-Hugo. Sets executed by Hermann Warm. Cast: Jeanne d'Arc: Mlle. Falconetti; Pierre Cauchon: O. Silvain; Loyseleur: Maurice Schutz; Jean Beaupère: Ravet; Jean d'Estivet: Andre Berley; Massieu: Antonin Artaud.

"THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC is largely made up of enormous pictures of faces, separated by dialogue titles. Despite a considerable amount of nervous movement on the part of the camera, the substance of the film as a whole is inherently static when compared to that of the best silent films of the period, though not in comparison with contemporary talkies. More than this, the subtitles are very numerous and seem rather an attempt to compensate for the absence of audible speech than to fulfill either a narrative or a dramatic purpose. All the rest is a great gallery of living portraits. For these and other reasons, Dreyer's direction has been as adversely criticized as it has been lyrically praised. The film's structure has been condemned as a kind of extension of still photography which is in no sense truly cinematic. It has been urged, too, with some justice, that the central situation is developed in a partial and oblique sort of way and that the director merely illustrates a fragment of the familiar tale instead of narrating it. Actually in this he is leaning upon a technique common enough in religious iconography, as in the Stations of the Cross represented in so many churches. Dreyer's film provides a deliberately limited experience of the whole situation and conflict, such as a contemporary witness might havehappened to catch. This explains why very little reference is madeeither to Joan's past or to France's struggle to expel the English. We see only the faces, the eyes, the tears, the woollen stuffs, leather, steel, stone, sky that Maté's camera lingers upon. Dreyer's method succeeds in giving the film a peculiar intimacy and poignancy, but it is undeniable that an audience unfamiliar with the historical circumstances would find it difficult to understand why the girl-heroine is being harassed, tortured and killed, or by whom. They might gather, perhaps, that it was an anti-religious film. Nevertheless the film can hold profound significance for many pious people, though it is to the liberal rather than to the exclusively pious mind that this picture says most. Bernard Shaw has declared that Joan of Arc was 'the first nationalist and the first Protestant.' Certainly she stands out clearly here as a symbol of the struggle between authority and the individual conscience. We are reminded of the opinion that the Bishop of Lisieux gave at the time: 'When she says she will not submit her acts and sayings to the decision and judgement of the Church Militant she utterly destroys the power and authority of the Church.'

"Upon its appearance THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC, though in no sense a widely popular film, drew generous acclaim and, significantly, was hailed as 'a work of art.' It should be recalled that in 1928 the notion had not been dispelled that in order to be excellent, a motion picture should in some way or another possess qualities reminiscent of 'real' art, that is to say of painting, sculpture, miniatures or the like. In the pictorial composition of JOAN many critics and amateurs undoubtedly detected a pleasant association with art photography, to portrait painting and to sculpture. One might conjecture, for that matter, that this film was conceived and

(continued)

executed consciously to be a work of art, which is possibly what makes it and other analogous films of the period seem today fundamentally rather self-conscious. This is a film addressed not to an instinctive or popular feeling for life, history, and the historical Joan, but to a relatively intellectual and sophicticated eye. The effort it betrays to force the medium towards a new kind of expressiveness entitles it, nevertheless, to respect and re-examination.

"The casting of the picture is remarkable and seemed more so at the time, each player being chosen and presented as an individual in the real (historic) world instead of as a more or less famous and highly paid favorite charmingly interpreting a costume piece. The late Mlle. Falconetti, who had no previous film experience, was regarded as an astonishing choice for Joan (her willingness to appear unadorned with grease paint also caused amazement), but Dreyer was not making a film based on precedent and needed no customary star. He had formed his own concept of the Maid from a study of the contemporary documents. It was neither the concept of dramatists like Schiller or Shaw, writers like Anatole France, nor was it that of the historians or hagiographers. Mlle. Falconetti, shorn and broken, may not be everyone's Joan though her interpretation was one of the most intense and affecting that the screen had seen.

"The story of Joan of Arc had appealed to film makers since the earliest years. George Méliès and Ferdinand Zecca, for example, both produced films on this subject in the first decade of the century, both of them delighting in the opportunities for trick effects and 'vision' which the supernatural element in the story afforded. Cecil B. DeMille's JOAN THE WOMAN (1917), a more impressive and technically much more highly developed essay on the same theme, in which Geraldine Farrar appeared as the Maid, well deserves revival. Since then in France, in Germany, and in America too, Joan's story has been retold on the screen, but Dreyer's alone among such later films transcends mere respectful pageantry and offers new light on the central character and her times. In the reiteration of gigantic close-ups and the absence of make-up, the film even today seems highly personal, and stands as an isolated experiment which characterizes and marks the close of silent film experiments in Europe, yet points, perhaps unwillingly, towards the new era." ("Film Notes," MMA)

Accompaniment on the piano by Raylene Pierce playing original Museum of Modern Art Film Library scores.

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Series I
THE FILM IN FRANCE

November 17, 1955

LE MILLION.....René Clair

Program Notes

LE MILLION (1930) Produced by Film-Sonores-Tobis. Direction and scenario by René Clair. Assistant Direction by George Lamombe. Photography by George Périnal and C. Raullet. Design by Lazare Meerson. From a play by G. Berr and M. Guillemaud. With Annabella, René Lefèbre, Louis Allibert and Vanda Greville.

The theme of LE MILLION is simple: a hunt for a misplaced lottery ticket - the ticket is worth "Le Million" and the hero who has lost it is pursued by his creditors while he pursues the ticket. The grace and subtlety of René Clair's comedy style are well illustrated in LE MILLION: from first to last the film is a series of comic improvisations on the theme. The imaginative variety of these improvisations and the special, almost choreographic pacing, provide the distinctive mark of René Clair. His best films - THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT (1927), SOUS LE TOIS DE PARIS (1929), LE MILLION (1930), and A NOUS LA LIBERTE (1931) represent a comedy style which, though it was derived in part from the early two-reelers and the comedies of Charlie Chaplin, brought screen comedy to a new level of sophistication. They are no longer simple situation comedies, dependent on the acting of one or a group of comedians: they are fully integrated comedies in which the episodes and variations enhance the scene. In these films the satirical elements, the slap-stick, the chases, all serve as part of the visual humor. Even at his most satrical and biting, even when handling frantic, ludicrous situations, Clair does not lose his sure control of the comedy rhythm.

LE MILLION, made in 1930, was one of the films of the transition period between the silent era and the sound era. In this period when so many of the directors floundered, Clair succeeded brilliantly in using sound as an enhancement of the film's visual qualities. LE MILLION is especially noteworthy as one of the first films which emphasized sound as a rhythmical accompaniment to the image. The hero's creditors running up and down the stairs, the various chases by taxi - each element in the film is given its own rhythmic weight in the total effect. The dialogue, which is sparce, is part of the musical flow: at times it takes the form of choral questions and answers.

Like Ernst Lubitsch's later comedies, LE MILLION is a musical comedy - the filmic rhythm is not broken by sound nor interrupted by song. The dialogue, the sounds, the music are part of the musical whole. Even the sequence at the opera (a precursor to the Marx Brother's sequence in THE NIGHT AT THE OPERA and Danny Kaye's sequence in KNOCK ON WOOD) does not interrupt the film's rhythm.

Though Clair's later films, such as THE GHOST GOES WEST, I MARRIED A WITCH, BEAUTY AND THE DEVIL, and BEAUTIES OF THE NIGHT have been more popular in this country than his early great comedies, they are distinguished by only occasional glimpses of his stylistic gift. The organized unity and the perfection of his high style belong to the period 1927-1931. Clair's films of this period bore a happy touch - details fit into place with such an appearance of ease that one tends to forget the controling mastery of the director. The audience is caught in the current of fantastic surprise and lunatic contrivances, which are so inventive and gay that one is happily unaware of looking at a masterpiece.

One of the few great early filmmakers who is still engaged in film production, René Clair is now at work on a new comedy with a Don Juan theme — LES GRANDES MANOEUVRES, with Michael Morgan and Gerald Philippe.

(continued)

In the course of this series - THE FILM IN FRANCE - we have seen three of René Clair's best films: ENTR'ACTE (1924), THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT (1927), and LE MILLION (1930). We have been able to study a Dadaist experiment and two comedies of farce and invention. In "Reflexion Faite", (Notes pour servir à l'histoire de l'art cinematographique de 1920 à 1950: N. R. F., Gallimard, Paris) - a rare literary outburst from a productive filmmaker, René Clair enthusiastically expounds some of his youthful ideas on filmmaking. Later films, made after Clair experienced six years in the Hollywood machine and another European war, stem from a less revolutionary spirit; but the following quotes date from 1923 and therefore indicate the spirit which produced those films which we have seen here.

René Clair, 1923: "The public should be sent to a school where it would learn nothing...your minds would be cleared, dear millions of friends, of all the waste of out-of-date literature, of all the artistic anodynes absorbed from childhood that prevent you looking at the world and at a work of art with an individual eye... What the cinema asks of you is to learn to SEE."

"Don't expect a masterpiece. Be content, sometimes, to be carried away on a stream of images. Thirty seconds of pure cinema in a film lasting one hour should be enough to keep up our hopes. If we ignore the absurdity of the story and abandon ourselves to the charm of flowing images, forgetting the reason for them, we can taste a new pleasure. Images: a moving countryside passes. A hand appears. The prow of a boat. The smile of a woman. Three trees in the sky. Images... Don't tell me what they mean according to the arbitrary laws of your language. It is enough to see them, to be pleased by their harmony and their contrasts. Le us learn how to look at what is in front of us. Words have assumed an exaggerated importance. We know most word combinations by heart. We have eyes and we still don't see."

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Series II
THE FILM IN GERMANY

January 12, 1956

PRIMITIVE GERMAN FILMS.....Skladanowsky
DON JUAN'S WEDDING.....Oskar Messter
MISUNDERSTOOD.....with Henny Porten
THE GOLEM (excerpt).....Paul Wegener
THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI.....Robert Wiene

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This evening begins the series of German films selected from the Museum of Modern Art Film collection. The great German period which contributed so much to the body of film technique and to the American studios in particular lasted from 1919 to 1928. In Germany, as elsewhere, the first films made were simple records of everyday scenes and vaudeville turns. About 1913 films appeared which can be regarded as the start of that long succession of productions which placed Germany in a position of importance in the world of cinema. The first German film to reach the United States after the World War I was PASSION, directed by Ernst Lubitsch. It was followed in 1921 by THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI. These two style of film - the highly theatrical costume film and the bizarre Expressionistic film - together with a third type which stressed resourceful craftsmenship by using lighting and camera work to achieve the dramatic impact in intimate studies of low life made a profound impression on Hollywood. Classic films in each of these three styles will be shown on this German series.

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PRIMITIVE GERMAN FILMS (1896) Made by the pioneer Skladanowsky. These are a group of animated pictures made before the invention of cinematography as well as early films. The subtitles cannot be translated without losing their period flavor.

DON JUAN'S WEDDING (1909) Produced by Messter-Film. Directed by Oskar Messter with Joseph Giampietro as Don Juan. "Messter seems to have been the first man to exhibit films in Germany. Though he began by importing Louis Lumière's pictures, he soon began to produce for himself and turned out a considerable portion of Germany's earliest films." ("Film Notes", MMA)

MISUNDERSTOOD (VERKANNT) (c1912) Producer and director unknown, probably Messter. "A favorite with moviegoers from her debut in 1909, Henny Porten, who appears here as Anna, grew up with the film and remained long the most popular actress in Germany." ("Film Notes", MMA)

THE GOLEM (1920) Directed by Paul Wegener. Scenario by Paul Wegener after an old legend. Photography by Karl Freund. Architecture by Hans Poelzig. Paul Wegener as the Golem. Wegener made an earlier version of this subject in 1914. This portion of his second and internationally famour GOLEM is included to represent Wegener's important contribution to German film development. The sequence is complete in itself, and shows how the clay image of the Golem was brought to life by the old Rabbi. This legendary figure of the middle ages is afterward instrumental in delivering the Jews from the oppression of their overlord.

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (1919) Produced by Delca-Bioscop; directed by Robert Wiene; scenario by Carl Mayer and Hans Janowitz; design by Herman Warm, Walter Reimann and Walter Roehrig; photography by Willy Hameister. Cast: Werner Krauss as Dr. Caligari, Conrad Veidt as Cesare, Friedrich Feher as Francis, Lil Dagover as Jane, Hans Heinz von Twardowski as Alan, Rudolph Lettinger as Dr. Olsen, Rudolph Klein-Rogge as a criminal.

"This is one of the few films that has remained constantly in circulation. It has never been popular, it was not seen outside Germany for some time after it was made and then often obscurely in small cinemas, but it is one of the three most famous of all films - the other two being the BIRTH OF A NATION and POTEMKIN. While it has directly contributed little or nothing to the development of cinematic art, it has played an important part in film history.

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"The influence of this film has been, almost entirely, outside the studios. When it was brought to America in 1921 by Samuel Goldwyn, when it was finally seen in Paris and in London, it acted as a powerful stimulus to critics...Actually when it first emerged, it reflected a whole trend in the modern movement in the arts but especially in the theatre, as developed in Germany. Unknown though this movement was to the general public, CALIGARI was recognized as having something to do with art, and so it had; though at this distance it is possible to question whether it had, basically, much to do with the art of the cinema. Yet, no matter what its merits or demerits, this film attracted new and intelligent audiences to the cinema and conferred prestige on it. It encouraged experiments in filmmaking, though ofter of a quite different type.

"Above all, it suggested that the film had as yet no more than scratched the surface of its potentialities. Though it stands outside the historical succession of cinematography, CALIGARI is unquestionably an arresting piece of work, remarkably consistent, and one which gives sharp visual pleasure.

"The story, perhaps intentionally, is neither clear nor logical. A young man is telling a companion of strange and unhappy events that have befallen him - his friend murdered and his fiancee driven insame with fright by a somnambulist under mesmeric control of an evil mountebank. After we see him force his way into the local asylum only to find the mountebank there, not as an inmate, but as the head alienist, it becomes clear that the narrator himself is insane and his story a mere hallucination; and the distorted landscapes and dwellings are therefore seen as appropriate to express the unreality of his vision." (Iris Barry)

Musical accompaniment by Raylene Pierce playing scores composed for the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.

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FILMS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY

Series II
THE FILM IN GERMANY

January 23, 1956

VARIETY.....E. A. Dupont

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Program Notes

VARIETY (1925) Directed by E. A. Dupont; photography by Karl Freund; produced by Ufa under Erich Pommer. With Emil Jannings and Lya de Putti.

"A work of art possesses a quality of timelessness, an inherent something that raises it above and beyond styles and vogues, and prevents it from dulling into datedness. Yet in the cinema, the youngest and perhaps the most raucous of the arts, artistic evaluation is extremely difficult because the cinema, more than any other medium, displays in an almost blind and shameless way, the flavor of its period. The cinema has developed so rapidly that its true accomplistments of the past are aften shrouded in naivete.

"In VARIETY we are confronted with an undeniable work of art; that is to say, a work whole and complete in itself, utilizing the resources of the camera alone to express what it has to say. But a work, nevertheless, so full of its period that we are liable to overlook its valuable contribution to the art of the film.

"When VARIETY was released it called forth more amazement and discussion than any other film before it except, perhaps, Wiene's CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI. Nothing like it had ever been seen. The camera which can see and record everything -- the blinking of an eye, the quiver of an eyelash, the most pertinent and telling details -- in VARIETY for the first time merged with the actors so that they no longer seemed conscious of it; it stole in upon their most secret impluses and thoughts, and without resorting to any of the methods formerly sanctioned, translated the slightest nuances expressed by the director. Fluid transitions, dissolves, the camera swinging on a trapeeze with the acrobat, use of sordid, very realistic background material supplanted the highly fantastic and stagy sets ordinarily employed. All of this represented a culmination of five or six years of experimentation in the German cinema. VARIETY, more than any other film up to that time reveals the art of the cinema. It resulted in Hollywood throwing up its hands in despair and wooing European actors, directors and technicians to America. Among them came Jannings, and thus began the great influx of cinematic talent to this country.

"All of this is necessary to understand in evaluating VARIETY today. For although all the technical devices innovated in it are now cliches, the film still provides a rich, full lesson in the use of cinema's most fabulous tool, the camera, and as a film, bears upon it from beginning to end the stamp of an individual. It was in the strictest sense 'avant-garde'." (ART IN CINEMA Program Notes).

The accompaniment by Raylene Pierce uses the score written for the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART
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Series II
THE FILM IN GERMANY

February 2, 1956

UBERFALL.....Erno Metzner
BERLIN: SYMPHONY OF A
GREAT CITY.....Walter Ruttman

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Program Notes

UBERFALL (Attack) (1929) Directed by Erno Metzner. Written by Erno Metzner and Grace Chiang. Photographed by Hans Casparius.

"When this socio-psychological study was first released in Germany, it was banned by the censors on the grounds of brutality and inducement to crime. The director, Erno Metzner, replied to the censors: 'UBERFALL is a short film, and corresponds to the short story form in literature...It represents an event, merely as a fact, and dry as a report. The contents consist of the hero's increasing state of fear... All the scenes aim merely at inducing the feeling of fear, the consequences of which is the psychologically irreproachable dream of fear that has been thought out as the film's culmination.'" (ART IN CINEMA program notes.)

BERLIN: THE SYMPHONY OF A GREAT CITY (1927) Directed by Walter Ruttman from a scenario by Ruttman and Karl Mayer. Photography by Karl Freund, Kuntze and Schaffer. Produced by Fox-Europa, Berlin.

"Much publicity was given Billy Wilder in his THE LOST WEEKEND for the lengths he went to in securing certain natural scenes of New York City by secreting his camera in packing boxes, etc. But in this film all the scenes were shot in this manner. Ruttman and Freund went so far as, in the barroom scenes, to secrete the camera in an adjacent room and shoot through a hole in the wall. Of course, this in itself has nothing to do with the artistic merit of the picture, but BERLIN was a more complete attempt than RIEN QUES LES HEURES to weld the surface aspects of a city into a symphonic form. You will notice that it is the creative possibilities of the material that motivate the director - and not the social implications implicit in shots of a city." (ART IN CINEMA program notes)

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Series II
THE FILM IN GERMANY

February 9, 1956

THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY.....G. W. Pabst

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Program Notes

G. W. Pabst preceded. THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY with an impressive list of undertakings. He discovered Garbo unemployed after her debut in THE STORY OF GOSTA BERLING and revealed her magic in THE JOYLESS STREET (1925); in SECRETS OF THE SOUL (1925-26) he worked under the supervision of Freud to make a film study of psychoanalysis; in WESTFRONT 1918 (1930) he made one of the first good talkies and most harrowing of anti-war films. However, when THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY was first shown in New York the audience felt it to be melodramatic and uncomplex. They had expected German films to provide a morbid sensuous pleasure beside which THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY looks as bleak and artless as a newsreel, whereas it was Pabst's tendency to "Americanize" the German technique that they were conscious of.

THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY (1927) Produced by Ufa. Directed by G. W. Pabst. Scenario by Ladislaus Vajda from a novel by Ilya Ehrenburg, Photography by Fritz Arno Wagner and R. W. Lach. With Edith Jehanne, Eugen Jensen, Uno Henning and Fritz Rasp.

"Pabst entered the field when the great era of German production had reached its zenith, and almost immediately broke with its style. Until now the best German films had been picturesque; but where CALIGARI owes much to the graphic arts and THE LAST LAUGH much to theatre art, THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY draws upon the younger art of photography. His settings and his individual scenes are quite as carefully composed as those of the more obviously artistic German films, but the craftsmanship is less apparent, the spectator is lead to feel 'how true' rather than 'how beautiful', and the eye is pleased not by aesthetic memories and comparisons, as in earlier German films, but by the uncompromising use of the motion picture camera itself. The 'new realism with a socialistic flavor' which had succeeded expressionism as an aesthetic impulse in Germany finds in Pabst's work its most characteristic reflection.

"Yet it was not by any abandonment of German studio-craft and technical resourcefulness that this director obtained his mastery: it was by utilizing it to the full, and pressing it to further, less mechanical uses. THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY is as much a tribute to the proficiency of the Ufa studios as was VARIETY: everything in it except the few Paris exteriors, however real-seeming, was taken in the studios. In the opening scene, Pabst uses the traveling camera rather pointedly to introduce the odious Khalibiev; but the cigarette stubs, the frowzy clothing, the shattered mirrors are revealing not for their picturesque qualities. They tell us exactly what manner of man this is, what manner of circumstances these are. In all Pabst's films his story is of highly individual people, here and now; and in almost all of them he utilizes eagerly one of the peculiar properties of the camera - its actuality.

" This film demonstrates to the full the eloquence which a simple but intelligent use of the camera can achieve: nowhere can the theoretician or student of cinematography more fruitfully observe certain elements of film making. Scene after scene, shot after shot, the perfect camera position had been selected. A much more showy use of the apparatus could easily be found, but not one that would better extract the uttermost significance from the material. Inconspicuously fine camerawork and psychological penetration are Pabst's particular strength. Many subtitles aid the narration of the complex plot, but it is not these which delineate character or betray impulses. Entire and highly subtle situations are delicately, firmly drawn without any use of titles at all. It is the camera which speaks.

(continued)

"It might be useful to consider one sequence in detail--that in which Khalibiev sells the list of Bolshevist agents to Ney. It lasts about three minutes. It contains not a single title. It says all there is to say about the two men and about their momentary relationship. How is it done? Though one is hardly conscious of it, the camera is constantly shifting with the instinctive movements of psychological necessity. Though one is scarcely aware of a single cut, there are forty cuts in this short scene -- needless to say, the director edited the film himself. Every camera position chosen urerringly, every cut made unobtrusively, every movement of the actors corresponding to an inner compulsion, the whole composition smooth yet fluid -- such is a typical piece of Pabst's discontinuous style of continuity.

"Though Ilya Ehrenburg, the author of the novel on which the film is based, has protested the transcription, the film preserves with remarkable faithfulness the spirit and 'adventure' character of the book. It is the treatment of the subject-matter, rather than the choice of material, which makes witnessing this film a disturbing experience, since everyone knows that there are men who, by their very nature, are crapulous, avaricious or obscene. What appalls us in the film is to see a young couple, their lives inextricably mingled with the course of events in modern Europe, seeking courage and comfort in each other in the midst of such distressing circumstances: the world about them is depicted with profound realism, and it is not customary to paint the vices so clearly. But Pabst is a moralist as well as a realist, and the motion picture camera is a formidable instrument in the hands of such a man. In communicating sensory values and first-hand experience as strongly as it does, it exposes both beauty and evil in a light still unhallowed by the aesthetic tradition which permits us to gaze without revulsion upon Goya's corpses and read without offence The Outcasts of Poker Flat." ("Film Notes", MMA)

The musical accompaniment is played by Raylene Pierce. The score was written for the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.

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Series II
THE FILM IN GERMANY

February 16, 1956

"M".....Fritz Lang

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Fritz Lang worked in the movie industry in Germany when the industry was at its height technically, when the post-war 'expressionism' had paled and the Nazi strong men were taking over, and when the individual was beginning to get pretty beaten down. The mood was one of disillusion, foreboding and violence. Lang created a world of psychological criminals, sadists, fatalistic murderers and hero gangsters who tortured themselves and everyone else in low-lit nightclubs, along deserted city streets and in cheap hotel rooms. This is the gangster film that Lang so successfully built up in Hollywood in the 30's. Lang has said: "The First World War brought changes to the western world. In Europe, an entire generation of intellectuals embraced despair... All over the world, young people engaged in the cultural fields, myself among them, made a fetish of tragedy..."

"M" (1931) is an excepted masterpiece of craftsmanship and horror. The vigor and brutal selectivity of the technique beats one into anxiety, suspense, sympathy and repulsion. The compulsive child-murderer represents the psychological situation of the time.

The followings are quotes from "From Caligari to Hitler" by Siegfried Kracauer:

> "Fritz Lang told me that in 1930, before "M" went into production, a short notice appeared in the press, announcing the tentative title of his new film, MURDERER AMONG US. Soon he received numerous threatening letters, and still worse, was bluntly refused permission to use the Staaken studio for his film. 'But why this incomprehensible conspiracy against a film about the Dusseldorf child-murderer Kurten?' he asked the studio manager in despair. 'Ach, I see,' the manager said. He beamed with relief and immediately surrendered the keys of Staaken...
>
> "'M' opens with the case of Elsie, a schoolgirl who disappears and after a while is found slain in the woods. Since her murder is preceded and followed by similar crimes, the city lives through a veritable nightmare. The police work feverishly to track down the child-murderer, but succeed only in disturbing the underworld. The city's leading criminals therefore decide to ferret out the monster themselves. For once, their interests coincide with those of the law...Even though the police meanwhile identify the murderer as a former inmate of a lunatic asylum, the criminals with the aid of a blind beggar steal a march on the detectives. At night, they break into the office building in which the fugitive has taken refuge, pull him out of a lumber room beneath the roof, and then drag him to a deserted factory, where they improvise a 'kangaroo court,' which eventually pronounces his death sentence. The police appear in time to hand him over to the authorities."

The center of the film is Peter Lorre's superb performance as the murderer. As he walks along the street eating an apple he appears soft and harmless. He will then see a girl, or some object which brings his mania to life and he reverts to his passion of compulsive slaughter. In the mock court room scene, defended by a deceptive strategist of an attorney drafted from the criminal group, the murderer cued by his defense pleads sickness and the need for a doctor, not a policeman. Lorre's play from mania to compulsion to pathetic pity is wily and animal. The group of criminals surrounding him is a stone wall. The human predicament is Lang's fort of human fear and fantasy.

February 27, 1956

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART announces the continuation of programs of films from the COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY...

SERIES III
THE FILM IN AMERICA

March 1 — Comedies of Chaplin and Sennett:
THE TRAMP, POLICE, THE BANK - Chaplin
COMRADES, MABEL'S DRAMATIC CAREER, THE SURF GIRL - Sennett

March 8 — The Rise of the American Film:
A FOOL THERE WAS - with Theda Bara
THE NEW YORK HAT - D. W. Griffith, with Mary Pickford
A CORNER IN WHEAT - D. W. Griffith

March 15 — A Fairbanks Extravaganza:
THE BLACK PIRATE - with Douglas Fairbanks

March 22 — The Realm of Comedy:
THE FRESHMAN - with Harold Lloyd
THE SEX LIFE OF THE POLYP - with Robert Benchley
THE SKELETON DANCE - Walt Disney
HIS BITTER PILL - Mack Sennett
THE DOCTOR'S SECRET - George Melies
GERTIE THE DINOSAUR - Winsor McCay

March 29 — The German Influence:
SUNRISE - F. W. Murnau, with Janet Gaynor
HANDS

April 5 — Late Slapstick:
MILLION DOLLAR LEGS - Edward Cline with Jack Oakie and W. C. Fields

ADMISSION will be by Series Ticket:
General Public, $3.50; Museum Members, $2.00.

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Series III
THE FILM IN AMERICA

COMRADES.....Mack Sennett
THE SURF GIRL..... " "
MABEL'S DRAMATIC
CAREER..... " "
THE TRAMP.....Charlie Chalpin
THE BANK..... " "
POLICE..... " "

Program Notes...

"Some of the earliest films were brief buffooneries or chases in which most of the participants fell down. Because the film is a profane art, the term 'comedy' in the cinema has always retained an allusion to clowning, improvisation, magic and the whole repertory of fairs, circus, vaudeville and charades. It has seldom referred to comedy as the stage knows it except in so far as the Commedia dell'arte and Aristophanes are comedy. For instance, a film like IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT is not a 'comedy', perhaps because its action is set in a world recognizably real, whereas a true film-comedy - a Laurel and Hardy, for instance - is conceived in terms of a non-existent universe of fantasy and frolic.

"Eminently one of the purest types of film, slapstick comedy originated in the little comic incidents of the primitive cinema, such as WASH DAY TROUBLES, and early 'chase' films from France. It developed after 1905 under the French comedian, Max Linder, who introduced the visual surprises which are to screen comedy what 'gags' are to vaudeville comedians.

"Mack Sennett, the master of American film comedy, studied Linder closely. When in 1912 Sennett became a director for Keystone, he carried slapstick to its final form. Despite his influence on Chaplin and on Rene Chair, Sennett's talent has always been underestimated. Slapstick today is decadent and people remember it, erroneously, as a lot of meaningless pie-throwing and rushing about. It was, instead, an ordered madness, a high form of cinematic play improvised with an instinctive grasp of visual rhythm and of tempo. Akin to carnival and to the circus, especially to the parade of the circus clowns, slapstick under Sennett was great not merely on technical grounds, but because it was inspired by a profound, wry knowledge of human nature and a most delicate observation of life." ("Film Notes", MMAFL)

COMRADES (1910); THE SURF GIRL (1916); MABEL'S DRAMATIC CAREER (1913): The versatility and abondon of this instinctive master of timing and the motion picture are illustrated in these five comedies featuring Raymond Griffith, Louise Fazenda, Mabel Normand, Hank Mann, Slim Summerville and others.

Charlie Chaplin was the most notable of Sennett's clowns -the one with genius. Chaplin worked first at Keystone under Sennett's tutelage. But within four months he was writing and directing his own films. At Keystone he was making films at the rate of about one a week. In 1915 he moved to Essanay where he was offered a less pressing schedule and $1250 a week. (In 1917 he became his own producer.) At Essanay Chaplin developed his character into the plucky and pathetic rover he is most famous for. He evolved the familiar costume at an earlier date but in THE TRAMP Chaplin brought a new human quality of sentiment and warmth to the character. A pathos was introduced to the tragic-comic vagabond alone on the road stretching towards the horizon. And as the character developed so did the entire film. The series of gag situations took a more controlled form and from these two-reelers came CITY LIGHTS and LIMELIGHT.

THE TRAMP; THE BANK; POLICE (all made in 1915) stared Charlie Chalpin and Edna Purviance. They were made when Chaplin was 26, and when, after one year of film making, he was already the screen's greatist artist-comedian.

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Series III
THE FILM IN AMERICA

A CORNER IN WHEAT.....D. W. Griffith
THE NEW YORK HAT.....D. W. Griffith
A FOOL THERE WAS.....Frank Powell

Program Notes

Between 1908 and 1918, the American film developed its own peculiar characteristics and became predominant on the screens of the world. The great directors of this brilliantly creative period were D. W. Griffith, Thomas H. Ince and Mack Sennett. But it was Griffith who established the superiority of the American film in this crucial period.

A CORNER IN WHEAT (1909) Produced by the Biograph Co. Directed by D. W. Griffith. Photographed by G. W. Bitzer. Cast: Frank Powell, Henry B. Walthall, and among the extra players - Mack Sennett, Arthur Johnson, Robert Harron, Claire MacDowell, and Jeanie MacPherson. "Griffith tried to make his characters resemble people in real life and to reveal them intimately. First, he experimented with lighting effects. Then, sensing the essential principles of cinematography, he boldly manipulated his material. Abandoning straightforward narrative and theatrical style, he ruthlessly cut action short, joined brief unrelated scenes together in the manner of THE GREAT ERAIN ROBBERY, inserted cut-backs and close-shots, and thus emphasized the freedom with space and time proper to the film. He used subtitles where necessary to bridge gaps, but seldom to expound plot.

"A CORNER IN WHEAT reveals the amazing strides Griffith had made in just over a year of independent direction. Unlike most film people of that day, he was convinced of the artistic possibilities of his medium, and even sought the aid of other arts to enhance them. The opening and closing sequences of A CORNER IN WHEAT are consciously modelled after Millet; the story itself, while reflecting the headlines of its day, shows an awareness of the novels of Frank Norris. For all its careful composition, its inventiveness, its innovation, A CORNER IN WHEAT was turned out in ten days - just another assignment for Griffith. No small part of our debt to him is the fact that he grasped each new assignment as an opportunity for experiment, never as mere routine." ("Film Notes", MMAFL).

THE NEW YORK HAT (1912) Produced by Biograph Co. Directed by D. W. Griffith. Photography by G. W. Bitzer. Original Story by Anita Loos. Cast: Mary Pickford, Lionel Barrymore, and among the extra players - Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Mack Sennett, Jack Pickford, Robert Harron, and Mae Marsh. "A girl with long curls, at first anomymous like all Biograph players but afterwards canonized as Mary Pickford, responded curiously to Griffith's direction. Her gestures were small, drawnout but expressive: there was warmth and sincerity in the parts she played. Even today, under the mawkish sentiment, the period morality and clothes, this little film remains singularly fresh and moving. Mary gives herself a half-disparaging look in the mirror, arranges one glove to look like a pair, and trips hopefully outdoors. This is neither literature nor theatre: it is pure film, of the kind we associate with Chaplin, yet made a year before Chaplin abandoned vaudeville for the screen. This close approach to the character, these details which illuminate a whole mood and have universal significance, are among Griffith's finest contributions to the cinema." ("Film Notes", MMAFL).

A FOOL THERE WAS (1914) Produced by Fox Film Co. Directed by Frank Powell. Cast: Theda Bara, Edward José and others. "In a sense every film is a document, since every film reflects the attitude toward life and the outward appearance of life existing in the country of its origin at the time it is made. Based on a current play of the same name inspired by the Kipling poem - which in turn was inspired by a painting of Philip Burne-Jones' - A FOOL THERE WAS shows little trace of its descent. Its villainess is determined rather than langorous; while the settings, the dresses and the behavior are typically pre-war but,, nevertheless, twentieth century.

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"A FOOL THERE WAS gave the word 'vamp' to the English language. As the incarnation of this aggressive variety of the femme fatale, Theda Bara became famous overnight. Apparently the first screen player to be the object of a publicity campaign designed to creat artificially a striking personality, this 'circumspect and demure' girl was given out to be half-Arab, a seeress and inscrutably but frightfully evil. Constantly photographed with skulls, with snakes, she was condemned to a career of wickedness through forty subsequent films.

"The director, Frank Powell, had acted in many films under Griffith, whose influence is evident in the bold though clumsy cross-cutting, and in the ingenious lighting of many scenes. The acting of Edward José lends some distinction to the final sequence and, altogether, A FOOL THERE WAS suggests with what energy the film of 1914 was struggling to attain size and expressiveness. " ("Film Notes", MMAFL).

The piano score written for these films will be played by Raylene Pierce.

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SERIES III
THE FILM IN AMERICA

March 15, 1956

THE BLACK PIRATE....Douglas Fairbanks

Program Notes

Douglas Fairbanks ranks with Griffith, Chaplin, Sennett and Ince as a creator of that well-paced, spacious and young film which came out of the 20's in Hollywood. It was a unique American magic and for all its absurd foolishness, very important to the millions of people who liked to go to the movies and project themselves into this smiling hero with a sword and a beautiful woman fast in hand. Ridiculous as it may seem to claim that Fairbanks, an acrobat, not an actor or an artist, is one of the outstanding figures in the world of cinema, it remains that his rhythm and his graceful perpetual movements are pure cinema. Perhaps it is the essential honesty of humanness, a superior idea of showmanship and much hard work that made itself felt in the building of the Fairbanks image. Fairbanks' films were constructed entirely under the enthusiasm of Fairbanks' himself and, as in the films of Sennett, Chaplin, René Clair, and other 'individual' producers, the power of one man's personality sparks the entire production. This is a thing which is hardly possible in the complex business of Hollywood right now - yet someone has to be very excited to make an exciting film.

Fairbanks was born in Denver, Colorado, in 1883. His father was a New York lawyer whom his mother divorced just after Fairbanks was born. He attended Harvard for five months and then fled to Europe on a cattle boat to 'bum' his way around England and Belgium. He then returned to New York as a clerk on Wall Street. In 1902 he got a job acting on Broadway and for the next twelve years he played on Broadway and in road company productions as a light comedian. In 1915 he came to Hollywood with so many other actors who saw the possibility of jobs in the new industry forming. Harry Aitken of the Mutual Corporation was responsible for this recruiting of screen stars from stage favorites. Aitken signed up Fairbanks, chosen in Aitken's words, "not on account of his stunts, as the majority think, but because of the humanness that fairly oozed out of him." During the shooting of his first film, D. W. Griffith, who was supervising, told him to get out and go to Keystone. Griffith couldn't stand the acrobatics that Fairbanks could not help embroidering into his set speeches, but other of the players saw in this gaiety material for a new screen character. Within two years Fairbanks was the idol of all small boys, and "the best-liked figure" on the screen.

Between 1915 and 1931 Fairbanks made forty-three films, and his costume films were among the best. His style of movement gloried in a costume of sideburns and a cape. He delighted in the swing of a cloak, the slender form of a doublet and the mounting of a horse. Fencing became a game of life, and Fairbanks, doing one thing well and all the time, became a symbol.

THE BLACK PIRATE (1926) Produced by United Artists. Directed by Alfred Parker. Design by Karl Oscar Borg. Cast: Douglas Fairbanks, Billie Dove, Donald Crisp, Sam de Grasse, Anders Randolph. THE BLACK PIRATE is the best example of Fairbanks performing feats of daring with memorable charm. In this buccaneering extravaganza Fairbanks delights in the romanticism of the pirates of the Spanish Main. THE BLACK PIRATE bears reshowing though it is seldom that Hollywood films do. It is the vitality of Fairbanks that makes this so, and at the time of the making of this film, his wisdom and discretion in using the organization and technical resources that Hollywood offers.

THE BLACK PIRATE was shot entirely in color, but the print that we show is black and white. In 1926 it was fashionable to add color to the effects as the story mounted its climax and Fairbanks' experiment in using color for this film was ambitious but not repeated by him, though it certainly must have added to the popularity of the film when it was first released.

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library score for THE BLACK PIRATE will be played by Raylene Pierce.

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Series III
THE FILM IN AMERICA

THE DOCTOR'S SECRET....George Méliès
GERTIE THE DINOSAUR....Winsor McCay
HIS BITTER PILL.....Mack Sennett
THE FRESHMAN.....Sam Taylor,
with Harold Lloyd
THE SEX LIFE OF THE POLYP.Robert Benchley
THE SKELETON DANCE.....Walt Disney

Program Notes

"Nowhere has the art of the motion picture developed with more vigor and originality than in the realm of comedy. Because the film is a profane or popular art,'comedy' on the screen has usually implied clowning, charades, spontaneous play and a whole repertory of fantasy and caricature, markedly unlike that of modern stage comedy, though it has borrowed freely from the theatre both in themes and actors. In America, from the earliest slapstick to the latest screwball comedy, the native vitality has created a comic genre as widely delightful as it is indigenous. These programs trace a cross-section through the work of several decades and many men, reviving some half forgotten pictures." (MMA)

THE DOCTOR'S SECRET (1908) Produced and directed by George Méliès. "Films were made at first to amuse unsophisticated people. They were consequently a form of entertainment in which the spirit of comedy was free and unrefined. The pranks of naughty boys, the humors of undress and of obesity, physical mishaps of all kinds were meat for the early movies.

"Méliès combined with a rabelaisian sense of humor a gift for imagining new kinds of machinery. Both are apparent in this early film, somewhat clinical for present taste." ("Film Notes", MMA)

GERTIE THE DINOSAUR (1909) Produced and directed by Winsor McCay. This short film is one of the earliest animation films. The technique used is inspired by the oldstyle "magic booklets" or "flippers".

HIS BITTER PILL (1916) Produced by Mack Sennett for Triangle-Keystone. Cast: Mack Swain, Louella Maxam, Ella Haines, Edgar Kennedy. "In 1916, the Western film was in its heyday and Bill Hart the idol of countless thousands. Since nothing was sacred to Mack Sennett and his irreverent comedians, a skit on the Western film was hardly to be resisted. Sennett's unerring instinct for the genuinely comic here guided him away from his customary slapstick towards a delicate but devastating kind of satire. HIS BITTER PILL is apparently a genuine Western, complete with heroic sheriff, villain, robbery and hard riding: but it is seen through an ingeniously distorted lens and the values are unerringly overemphasized or misplaced. The subtitles are pure mockery." ("Film Notes", MMA)

THE FRESHMAN (1925) Produced by Pathé. Directed by Sam Taylor and Fred Newmeyer. Cast: Harold Lloyd, Jobyna Ralston and others. "The Lloyd character, a typical American country boy, struggles eagerly to adapt himself to circumstances more complex and more sophisticated than are natural to him. He is always successful in the end, but comedy arises from situations which reveal how difficult this adaptation is. There is no tragedy in the Lloyd films, but there is some pathos and a singularly warm-hearted understanding of the secret ambitions of ordinary people. In THE FRESHMAN, the Lloyd motif is worked out with especial perfection, and its satire on undergraduate ambition remains as fresh as it is goodnatured." ("Film Notes",MMA)

THE SEX LIFE OF THE POLYP (1928) Produced by Fox Movietone Enterprises. With Robert Benchley. This film was made in the experimental days of sound films and it is one of the first pieces of substained dialogue to be recorded on film. This mock-lecture at a ladies club shows Benchley's unfailing grasp of the possibility of screen humor and dialogue.

THE SKELETON DANCE (1929) Produced by Columbia Pictures Corporation. Directed by Walt Disney. This satrical and macabre cartoon was Disney's first Silly Symphony. Its new use of music in sound film brought a vitality to dance movements on the screen which the silent film lacked.

Except for the last two films which are sound, the films tonight will be run silent.

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Series III
THE FILM IN AMERICA
March 29, 1956

THE GERMAN INFLUENCE:
HANDS.....Stella Simon
SUNRISE.....F. W. Murnau

Program Notes

HANDS (1928) Directed by Stella Simon. Music arranged by George Antheil from Marc Blitzstein score. Mrs. Simon went to Germany to experiment with the film medium at a time when that country was leading the way in film technique. HANDS was made purely as an experiment with visual images in time and space together with the tonal value of music. Hands were used to avoid the personalities of actors - and to quote Mrs. Simon: "The film, and the movements of the hands, were not intended to have symbolic significance...all interpretations-from sex to the cosmos-were not the intention... the film was a technical experiment with the film medium...and was meant to be amusing, not taken seriously". However, Mrs. Simon says that the film does have a theme: from chaos came law and order, groups and opposing groups, and the individual. With this film Mrs. Simon tried to discover a form for the film medium.

SUNRISE (1927) Produced by Fox Films. Directed by F. W. Murnau. Scenario by Carl Mayer. Design by Rochus Gliese. Cast: George O'Brien, Janet Gaynor, Margaret Livingston, Bodil Rosing, J. Farrell Macdonald. "When the late F. W. Murnau made this, his first American film, he selected his own story and prepared the scenario with Carl Mayer as he had done before for THE LAST LAUGH. The sets, too, were designed by a German associate of Murnau's and carried out without regard to expense. The Fox studios were determined that he should surpass his previous achievement. That he hardly succeeded was neither their fault or his. He was operating in an alien atmosphere, cut off from the collective support and counsel of the highly organized corps of his countrymen in the Berlin studios, he was directing actors he could not possibly understand and a technical staff trained to wholly different references.

"SUNRISE is both impressive and unequal. Few films begin more effectively. The dazzling glimpse of the railway station and the subsequent multiple shots suggest in brilliantly visual terms all the summertime gaiety of vacations and resorts. The specific village which then appears is executed in a quite different and rather arty style, while the acting of the chief characters seems at first over-stylized yet shallow. When the camera follows Margaret Livingston through the village, or traverses meadows and marshlands with George O'Brien, the film develops emotional tension as well as pictorial beauty. Here, however, it is often not clear whether the camera - and therefore the audience - is identified with the actor or merely the roving spectator of an extended scene. No such confusion occurs in the sequence in the trolley car, for with an exact comprehension of the psychological laws that should determine the direction of any scene, the actual ride is experienced at first hand, although again the arrival in town is witnessed objectively.

"With the two chief characters in happier mood, Murnau succeeded in handling his players more convincingly. There is real poetry and real feeling in what follows, especially in the peasant dance, though the inebriation of the little pig and the byplay with the lady with the shoulder-straps provide comic relief quite out of key with the work as a whole. Throughout the film the photography and the lighting are masterly, and the sets unusually pleasing, except when they strive to reduplicate paintings. The tempo both of the acting and of the cutting is well considered and, in the final sequence when nemesis has belatedly overtaken the hero there is, in the present synchronized version of the film, a singularly apt use of music as the horns call with a profound suggestion of loss and frustration across the dark waters of the lake." ("Film Notes", MMA)

ART IN CINEMA SPRING 1957 WORLDS OF THE FILM MAKER SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

PROGRAM NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Each of the arts has the ability to transport us to another world - its own world, the nature of which, in every separate instance, is determined partly by the senses (hearing, vision, touch) played upon by the art-medium in question, and partly by the individual example confronting us.

The motion picture is especially powerful in evoking its own worlds, because so many of our senses are affected at the same time; and the landscape, so to speak, of the movie-world is singularly varied within its boundaries, because such a great gamut of viewpoint and subject-matter is available to the movie-maker.

It is often possible to subdivide a vast range of experience into major categories - and, at times, such a subdivision may serve a useful purpose, i. e., that of clarification.

Bearing this in mind, the San Francisco Museum of Art has subtitled its cinema series for 1957 Worlds of the Film Maker. This is an approach differing from (although complementing) the more usual historical survey and the exploration of experiment, because, interestingly enough, from the very beginning of its existence as an art, the film has naturally assumed a multiplicity of aspects, ranging from stark realism to the freest fantasy. Thus each program of the present series might logically have been put together from work of all periods, though not necessarily in historical sequence. That most of the films are recent, and some very new, is due simply to the fortunate fact that sufficient contemporary material of potential interest to Museum audiences was available. Future programs, when the occasion calls for it, will include landmarks in motion picture history as well as examples of the most recent trends.

ART IN CINEMA members will be interested to note that only a few of the program items have been shown at the Museum before; these exceptional repetitions were made because the material had high intrinsic interest as well as special relevance to the program design.

I THE WORLD OF UNVARNISHED REALITY Friday, May 31, 8:30 PM

Philosophers have been arguing about the meaning of the concept "reality" from time immemorial, and there is no sign that agreement is imminent. This need not concern us too much, however, in the present case: for our purpose we can define realism in the arts as the attempt to record, or transcribe, life as we experience it with a minimum of interpretation by the artist, and a minimum of manipulation of the effects of his medium for their own sake. We tend to think of realism in art as usually slightly depressing, if not downright harrowing; this may be explained, perhaps, because the realistic artist, having eschewed expression and decoration, has to find the emphasis needed to make his production interesting, in the fabric of its theme - and life, as it is lived, seems too often to deviate from monotony only when it becomes unbearable. This is a pessimistic view of the matter; to be sure, where the film is concerned, there has been no lack of grimness; but, as our selection demonstrates, life has its cheerful moments, too, and these, in sensitive hands, can serve as the substance of a valid work of art without decoration or distortion.

SPECIAL SCREENING Frank Stauffacher: PORT OF THE CITY OF SAINT FRANCIS This film, shown as a tribute to Mr. Stauffacher's memory, does not precisely fall into the category of realism, which is the keynote of the evening. PORT OF THE CITY OF SAINT FRANCIS is a documentary, dealing with a city and its surroundings; but it is a poetically conceived and constructed work. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about it is its integration of commentary (a prose passage of Stevenson sensitively read by Vincent Price, the noted actor) and music (largely excerpts from Dohnanyi's Symphonic Minutes) with a succession of visual impressions of people, places and the weather, so that the keenest interest is maintained from beginning to end without recourse to

plot or the more familiar devices for continuity. It is a beautiful film; seeing it, one cannot help thinking of the further work in a similar vein which its creator might have produced if the time had been given him. I William Hale THE TOWERS In a fairly dreary suburb of Los Angeles, where there are few palm trees and no movie stars, an Italian tile-setter and artisan devoted his spare time, and a great deal of physical toil and creative effort, over a considerable stretch of years, to the erection of a fantastic monument - a cluster of metal towers, intricate in shape, and glittering with encrustations of tile and broken glass. This film is a straightforward account of the phenomenon; the camera methodically travels over the structure, like an analytical eye; in the sound track we hear bits of comment from the designer himself, and from his puzzled but good-humored neighbors. Perhaps the main thread of the narration has a touch of the buttery-voiced pompousness of the professional radio announcer; however the production as a whole is a good example of the factual film essay in which communication is the prime intention. II Union of South Africa ANIMALS UNLIMITED This is another example of the competently-photographed, well-constructed factual documentary, in which the element of excitement comes from the visual and connotative impact of the subject-matter: in this case, the teeming big-game fauna of the African countryside. To see the crocodile slide forebodingly into the water, to watch the lioness pounce on her prey, simply as phenomena interesting in themselves, is a welcome relief from the well-known pattern consisting of bits of nature-cinema interlarded as local color in some preposterous drama of human passions, inflamed by greed, sex and the tropical sun. III John Whitney and James Macminemin LION HUNT This is not an example of realism in cinema; its relevance to the program is purely that of subject-matter. IV Astrid and Bjarne Henning-Jensen DITTE, CHILD OF MAN This Danish motion-picture is straightforwardly photographed and constructed; an occasional use of montage and other cinematic flourishes hardly disturbs the even tenor of its way. Even more from its basic attitude toward life, however, than from its technique, DITTE falls into the category of realism. A problem is stated in simple human terms - that of illegitimate birth, its effect on the child and on society as a whole - in this case represented by rustic village-folk of Scandinavia. One is reminded of Ibsen, except that the Henning-Jensens, even more strictly than the Norwegian master-playwright, refuse to state or even imply a pat solution. The result is interesting; for boredom with stock characters moving through a cliche situation, is substituted the most natural human sympathy. This is a first-rate example of the power of the cinema to affect the emotions directly, without recourse to technical embellishments, elaboration of plot, or the axe-grinding tactics of moralizing philosophy.

II THE HIGHLY VARNISHED WORLD OF EMOTION Friday, June 7, 8:30 PM

The realistic film may, as the first program amply demonstrated, evoke emotion in the audience, sometimes of memorable impact; it may even portray emotion as one aspect of the reality surrounding us; but its method, by definition, is factual and analytical. Many great motion-picture makers, on the other hand, have used essentially emotional methods to obtain their effects: that is, they have distorted and embellished subject matter, and have exploited plastic devices of image, rhythm, sound and connotation, deliberately to create a world significantly different from the one in which we live our daily lives. There is a distinction, none the less, between the emotionally conceived, or expressionist film, and the film of sheer fantasy, which will be presented in the program for June 21. Subjective though they may be, the motion pictures dealt with in the present, second part of the series, are in no case totally divorced from daily experience; they are, as has been said, alterations, and a part of their effectiveness comes from the fact that familiarity is strangely mingled with our experience of the newly revealed worlds they represent. I Robert Pike: THE LEG and DESIRE IN A PUBLIC DUMP These two short pictures by a young Southern Californian reveal a promising talent for that hard-to-define but unmistakable characteristic known as film-quality or film sense. In each case the focus of attention shifts back and forth between the real world of objective events, and the inward world of fantasy and imagination, as these are experienced by the characters - the transition being effected by an intelligent use of the device of changing from monochrome to color. In attitude these are interesting little pictures: the daydreams of a pretty girl who is morbidly conscious of the fact that she has an artificial leg, and of a vagabond whose fantasy of love is aroused by the litter in a rubbish-heap, are enacted and portrayed with real poetic sensibility. At the same time Mr. Pike seems to be well-furnished with a sense of humor; the title of the second picture (which, as a fellow film-maker remarked on hearing it, could well be used as a generic title for all experimental films of a well-known type) was certain-

ly not arrived at in a spirit of utter solemnity. II Larry Jordan: UNDERTOW This is another short film by a young man of promise, who understands the capacity of the motion picture for investing images with symbolic meaning. Perhaps it is more than a coincidence that the Freudian concept of dream symbolism should have grown up contemporaneously with the cinema, which, better than any other medium, can make ambiguity explicit. III Curtis Harrington: DANGEROUS HOUSES In this interesting film, made in London at about the same time as James Broughton was producing PLEASURE GARDEN in that city, we perceive relationships with the work of Jean Cocteau, and that of Maya Deren. Like Cocteau's ETERNAL RETURN and ORPHEUS, DANGEROUS HOUSES is a paraphrase of an ancient story - in this instance, a section of Homer's Odyssey, which tells of Ulysses' encounter with the witch Circe, and his descent to Hades. The reminiscence of Miss Deren is more a matter of style; Mr. Harrington has a similar ability to make his characters perform improbable actions in a manner that compels belief. This is not to imply that DANGEROUS HOUSES is essentially imitative: it is a work that establishes its own mood and atmosphere. After seeing it, the audience may well reflect on the surmise of Jung, that the link between the real world and the world of legend is in sober fact the world of dreams. IV Louis Hough and George Towner: THE INSPECTOR'S REVENGE Satire is, in its way, a form of Expressionism. That is to say, it distorts its raw materials in order to heighten their impact. To lampoon, in the broadest possible terms, the genre of the violently sadistic detective thriller proved an ideal pretext whereby the two young creators of THE INSPECTOR'S REVENGE could work out their approach to motion-picture spectacle based on such august models as Sergei Eisenstein and Mack Sennett. This film has the crudeness of slapstick, heightened by the incongruities inseparable from limited means and equipment, especially when large-scale effects are essayed. The sound-track is played on a phonograph disc, which presents its own problems of synchronization. But THE INSPECTOR'S REVENGE unquestionably shows film sense, and the prediction is made herewith, that, increasingly in the future, ART IN CINEMA patrons will recall that they once saw a Hough-Towner "first." V.J. Padgett Payne and Welland Lathrop: TRIPTYCH The agony, in this series of three dance episodes, is intense - but it continues just long enough to achieve maximum effect without overstraining or bathos. Mr. Lathrop shows himself to be a very skillful dramatic dancer, and from the raw material of his gestures and attitudes, a new plastic whole is created by constant and intelligent manipulation of the camera. This is not, in other words, a mere factual recording of expressive dancing, but an expressive synthesis of dance-movement and camera-movement. VI UPA: THE TELL TALE HEART Aside from a few classic (and very transitory) instances, like the flight of vultures in Disney's Snow White, the cartoon has remained pretty largely concerned with the mood of jollity; its function on the average movie program has been to keep the youngsters happy while Mother and Father dry the tears they have been enjoying during the climax of the feature picture. The relative newcomers in the cartoon field, UPA, have broken with tradition in several respects. They have made TV commercials that are downright facetious, where too often the prototype has oscillated between the unlikely extremes of an idiot's gurglings and an apocalyptic New England cautionary sermon. On the other hand they have used the inherent, cumulatively effective rhythmic possibilities of animation-plus-soundtrack to recreate the gruesome little Poe monologue with a force it is hard to imagine any other treatment, short of the original, having achieved. It is not at all necessary to stretch the meaning of the term expressionism to include the UPA cartoon, THE TELL TALE HEART.

III FANTASY AND ABSTRACTION: WORLDS OF THE UNFETTERED IMAGINATION Friday, June 21, 8:30 PM

The fantasy films on this program have one thing in common: they call for a suspension of belief on our part. That this suspension comes so easily is a significant commentary on the power of the motion picture to affect a whole group of our senses in unison: whether we are transported to the world of outer space, to the distant past or the remote future, or to the topsy-turvy landscape of a madman's hallucination (or that of a visionary poet) the transition is swift and seems at times almost automatic. It is interesting to observe, when the theatre lights have risen after the momentary darkness following the last flicker of a good fantasy film, that there are moments when the real world to which we have been returned is the one that seems fantastic and hard to accept.

Unlike realism, expressionism or fantasy, abstraction in art is little concerned with our emotions - or, when these are to be involved, it is in a non-specific, generalized way. What the abstract film-maker is aiming at is a department of our consciousness that is universally present, but, too often, lies outside the periphery

of experiences we have been accustomed to verbalize, and hence, very frequently neglect to cultivate. This area of consciousness is basically the same, of course, as that which interests the abstract painter or sculptor, and certainly (because of the nature of music) the composer in general: a faculty of responding to balance, consistency, order - or even a consistently disordered set of relationships - for their own sake, rather than being concerned with the phenomena that exemplify these attributes. Thus, in the case of the abstract film, the images projected on the screen may be recognizable (as, human bodies, buildings, ripples in water and so forth) or they may be sheer geometrical constructions, two or three dimensional; the criterion of abstractness lies in the way our perception is directed. Again it is a commentary on the persuasive power of the motion picture to note that many people who are little affected by abstract painting, find themselves able to respond to an equal degree of abstractness in the film - and, in many cases, they also find that, as this ability to enjoy the contemplation of relationship rather than object increases, it begins to function even for the more static arts of painting and sculpture.

I University of Southern California QUETZALCOATL The stone and clay images upon which this film is based are the distorted but quite recognizable likenesses of human beings and animals; it is even constructed on the outline of a Mexican legend; but the powerful design-quality of pre-Columbian sculpture dominates every other tendency, so that it seems logical to group QUETZALCOATL with the other more purely non-objective items on the program. There have been a number of well-known attempts to synthesize motion-pictures by the device of making the camera scan static works of painting and sculpture. This is one of the more successful, partly because it has been held down to a length where monotony does not set in, partly because of well-managed lighting, and partly because it was feasible to give variety by imparting motion to the objects themselves. QUETZALCOATL is quite different in effect from, say, THE TOWERS, shown on a previous program; it is not, like that film, a documentary about a group of three-dimensional shapes, but a formal creation in its own right, using the objects as elements. II John Whitney: HOT HOUSE and CELERY STALKS AT MIDNIGHT This is not the place to discuss techniques of animation; suffice it to say that John Whitney (together with his brother, James) has devised a number of methods for making abstract shapes appear to move about on the screen. Although experimental in origin, these two very short films are complete works of art, synchronized with music. To anyone who, after reading the titles, still thinks of all abstraction as solemn, these pictures will evoke a novel, and very pleasant, mood. III Jordan Belson: MANDALA and Jane Belson: LOGOS All abstractions are not alike, any more than all Europeans are alike - even though they may look like peas in a pod to a newly-arrived Oriental or Martian. The two Belson films, for example resemble each other at least superficially, in that many similar images appear in them; and they have similarities of rhythm, due, no doubt, to the means of animation. But they are as different as can be from John Whitney's brief essays, not only in visual impact but in mood: here too, titles may be indicative. The mandala is a symbol of Oriental religion; and Logos was the word of the old Greeks for the ruling force of the Universe, shaping the destinies of gods and men alike. The musique concrete score of LOGOS, by Henry Jacobs, is interesting: the term signifies a sound sequence in which effects have been artifically created by manipulating such electronic devices as the tape-recorder. IV Curtis Harrington: ASSIGNATION Like Mr. Harrington's DANGEROUS HOUSES, ASSIGNATION has a literary source - this time Poe, instead of Homer. However it requires no foreknowledge of the situation to enter into the atmosphere of macabre fantasy that is established by a heavily draped and masked figure, gliding in a gondola past the tawny, weathered stone of Venetian palaces. This is not a film of event, or even description; it has little relation to the world of daily life; in it are blended literary imagination and sheer visual pleasure. V James Broughton: PLEASURE GARDEN This divertissement has had successful screenings in San Francisco, including one at the Museum; it is repeated in response to considerable demand, and also because it so well typefies one of the veins of fantasy. Mr. Broughton shows himself, in the film, to be under no illusions about the every-day world; he disdains, however, to recreate it, either realistically or in terms of expressionist distortion. Instead, he blithely invents an imaginary world of his own, and proceeds, through the deus ex machina of a fairy godmother, who must be seen to be believed, to arrange events to suit the characters and situations, and incidentally, without doubt, himself. It is a very satisfactory performance throughout, and tremendously reassuring in that it proves conclusively that poetically experimental cinema need be neither lugubrious nor ponderous. VI Thurber and UPA: THE UNICORN IN THE GARDEN This seems to be an ideal wedding of talents: the non-cute UPA approach to animation excellently suits Thurber, both visually and in respect to content. Here, as in PLEASURE GARDEN, a fantasy situation comments on life without imitating it;the comment lacks the

the good-humored indulgences of Mr. Broughton, however; one detects, in savoring it, a distinct flavor of bitter almonds.

IV SLIDE SEQUENCES: THE WORLD OF THE FROZEN IMAGE

At the time when the motion picture was invented, lantern slides, both photographic and hand-painted, were an accepted and popular institution. Understandably enough, as the possibilities of the new medium were seen, and swiftly and effectively exploited, the slide program fell into a state of relative eclipse. Slides, of course, continued to be used as illustrations for lectures, both popular and learned; and, since the invention of color-film, which yields a positive transparency, personal snapshots of burgeoning babies, rose-bushes sagging under the weight of their splendor, and intrepid family groups posed before awesome backgrounds of the Grand Canyon or the Matterhorn, have been seen in vivid projection in countless living rooms throughout the world. The slide-series as an art form, however, has received little attention: a regrettable circumstance, since it has within its scope certain effects for which neither the isolated photographic print, nor yet the full-fledged cinema, can offer a substitute.

Just as we are beginning to realize that the harpsichord is a unique and irreplaceable musical instrument, which the pianoforte by no means rendered obsolete, so we should think of the slide-sequence as a form the potentialities of which have only begun to be investigated. Specifically, a series of related projected images has continuity: it can develop visual and connotative themes in time, which becomes one of its dimensions. And yet each separate image is complete in itself; the magical quality of static, pictorial equilibrium, which, in the cinema, is dissolved by movement both within the image and on the part of the camera - this equilibrium is an essential plastic means of the composer of a slide-sequence.

Fortunately, a nucleus of creative work in this category does exist; and, since the slide-sequence is perhaps more nearly related to the motion picture (both in its basic tools and in its intention) than to any of the other arts, a program of slide series has been assembled for the final evening of Worlds of the Film Maker. It is the hope of the San Francisco Museum of Art that sufficient interest may be stimulated by this program to make possible future presentations of the same kind.

One fact should be pointed out, as a footnote of interest: that, whereas the cost of equipment and material for even a short motion picture is so great as to seriously hamper the individual worker of ordinary means, that involved in making a photographic slide series is relatively modest.

I Harry Bertoia GRAPHIC POEM Mr. Bertoia, as both his sculpture and his furniture clearly show, thinks in terms of space and light: the tangible, structural elements act almost as defining forces rather than as entities in themselves. This GRAPHIC POEM consists of 47 consecutively planned drawings, intended to be seen in slide form - that is to say, as projected photographic images. The images hover between geometric abstractions and abstracted landscapes, peopled with figures like transparent dancers - or perhaps like the skinsdancers would shed if they went through [illegible] metamorphoses like the larvae of dragonflies. Movement and the play of light are strongly implied; the static slide image preserves this impression, which, in an animated film, would be lost, since actual movement would be substituted for implicit. II James Whitney: YANTRA SEQUENCES More fluid, more vividly colored than Mr. Bertoia's, and at the same time less pictorial, the images of James Whitney are none the less of the same general category: that is to say, they are color transparencies photographed from consecutively related paintings. In design and surface quality, these beautiful pictures reveal a kinship to much that is new and vital in easel painting, they are pervaded, at the same time, by the sense of mysticism and other-worldliness that we associate with the art and philosophy of the East. III Sydney Pawson: THE NON-OBJECTIVE EYE There is wit and a sharp perceptiveness about these images: no color-film record of drawing or painting, but unmanipulated photographs of the structures and surfaces of the real world - often exposed to the impartial eye of the camera in such a manner that no "pictorial" content is revealed - and, when recognizable details do remain, still chiefly characterized by a strong abstract relationship of forms. IV John R. Baxter: THE ACTION OF WATER and SIMPLE FUGUE These two sequences consist of representational Kodachrome transparencies (it goes without saying that they were made with abstract values in mind as well) related in two different ways: in the first instance, by context; in the second, by imitation from one slide to the next of various design characteristics, without reference to content - although, as the title implies, themes, or key-images, do ap-

pear in cyclic form. The subject matter of THE ACTION OF WATER is subdivided into sections or movements, relating to the sea, to the swamp and to the river. The recurring images of SIMPLE FUGUE may be interpreted ad libitum so long as their possible symbolic meaning is not assumed to have serious philosophical intention. In both sequences, the frequent use of images in which motion has been "frozen" is deliberate, and relates to the esthetic intention of the artist. V Charles Eames: HOUSE This very interesting work is made up of film-footage composed from slides - so that it might be thought of as exemplifying a form transitional between the slide-sequence and the motion picture. None of the images moves, but the devices of the film-maker, such as dissolves, quick cuts, montage and so forth give it a flowing tempo reminiscent of the true cinema. Inevitably some of the still-image quality of individual photographs is lost thereby; but the gain in flexibility of timing and general continuity suit it especially well to purposes like that of Mr. Eames in HOUSE. A good modern dwelling (designed and lived in by the artist himself) is systematically explored with the 35 mm. still camera, together with its ornaments, furnishings and plants; the result, when the images have been converted to film-footage and edited, is a many-faceted architectural portrait which manages to convey as much of atmosphere and reflected personality as it does of visual appearance. Mr. Eames, among his many creative undertakings, is continuing to develop the slide sequence and slide film, adapting these to other suitable subject matter. It is the hope of ART IN CINEMA that the results will appear on future programs.

John R. Baxter
Curator
San Francisco Museum of Art

ART IN CINEMA SPRING 1957

WORLDS OF THE FILM MAKER

ART IN CINEMA was launched by Frank Stauffacher in 1946, at the San Francisco Museum of Art, and became a tradition in the area, emphasizing exploration of creative films of all kinds. It is continued in the spirit of its founder.

This Spring Series is subtitled *Worlds of the Film Maker* in order to call attention to one of the most interesting characteristics of the motion picture as an art form: its ability to transport the audience to another world, which is really not singular but plural, varying in each instance with the viewpoint and technique exemplified.

FREE PROGRAM NOTES This idea is expanded and applied to the material of the programs in a sheaf of notes by John R. Baxter, educational curator at the Museum. These notes will be available in advance of the opening of the series, and may be obtained at the information desk; or, on receipt of a large, stamped self-addressed envelope, will be mailed on request.

SPECIAL SCREENING *Port of the City of Saint Francis,* made by the late Frank Stauffacher, will be shown at 8:30 P.M. on Friday, May 31, to initiate the first program of *Worlds of the Film Maker.* The San Francisco Museum of Art, wishing as it does to continue the high standard of past performances, recognizes that the special quality of *Art in Cinema* from the very beginning, was given by the personal touch, the scholarly attitude and original creative gift of Frank Stauffacher. This individual quality is, of course, irreplaceable. The present showing of *Port of the City of Saint Francis* is dedicated to his memory.

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 8:30 P.M. THE WORLD OF UNVARNISHED REALITY

THE TOWERS *by William Hale.* Fantastic architecture; straightforward filming and narration. ANIMALS UNLIMITED *Union of South Africa.* The African veldt, seen without Tarzan, buried treasure or white goddesses. LION HUNT *by John Whitney and James Macminemin.* A brief interjection, not altogether irrelevant. DITTE, CHILD OF MAN *by Astrid and Bjarne Henning-Jensen.* A cliche situation made real and touching by simplicity and utter honesty of technical means.

FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 8:30 P.M. THE HIGHLY VARNISHED WORLD OF EMOTION

THE LEG and DESIRE IN A PUBLIC DUMP *by Robert Pike.* Sordid situation and setting; poetically sensitive approach. UNDERTOW *by Larry Jordan.* Explicit ambiguity about the uneasy world of adolescence. DANGEROUS HOUSES *by Curtis Harrington.* A paraphrase of the *Odyssey,* resembling a foreboding, yet sometimes strangely lyrical, dream, transferred to film as if to challenge analysis in terms of the waking world. THE INSPECTOR'S REVENGE *by Louis Hough and George Towner.* Wild satire; the spirit of Sennett and the cinematic method of Eisenstein give new life to the genre of the tough criminal and the tougher detective. TRIPTYCH *by Welland Lathrop and J. Padgett Payne.* The basis of many a real-life tragedy is poignantly expressed in this brief dance film. THE TELL TALE HEART *UPA.* The cartoon in an unusual aspect interprets the dark imagination of Poe.

FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 8:30 P.M. FANTASY AND ABSTRACTION: WORLDS OF THE UNFETTERED IMAGINATION

QUETZALCOATL *University of Southern California.* The stone and clay images of ancient Mexico in dual motion: their own and that of the shifting camera. HOT HOUSE and CELERY STALKS AT MIDNIGHT *by John Whitney.* Brief but complete visual experiences in a synthetic universe, created by a pioneer in the field of the non-objective moving image. MANDALA *by Jordan Belson.* Non-objective design, pulsating in rapid mutation. Need meditation be lengthy? LOGOS *by Jane Belson.* Radial images, not flowers, neither stars nor snowflakes, wax and wane to the sound of *musique concrete* (created by *Henry Jacobs* for the film.) ASSIGNATION *by Curtis Harrington.* From the writings of Poe: over the murky Venetian waters a red flower is carried to a terrace before an old palace. PLEASURE GARDEN *by James Broughton.* A cheerful nightmare with a happy ending. Proof that comedy need not lack sensibility, given by the well-known San Francisco poet and filmmaker. UNICORN IN THE GARDEN. *Thurber and UPA* combine fable and wry fantasy.

FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 8:30 P.M. SLIDE SEQUENCES: THE WORLD OF THE FROZEN IMAGE

When the image moves, or the camera moves, something is gained; by the same token, something is lost. To recapture and to explore this elusive quality is the aim of the final program of WORLDS OF THE FILM MAKER.

GRAPHIC POEM *by Harry Bertoia.* The visual imagination of the noted sculptor and designer creates and peoples an environment. YANTRA SEQUENCES *by James Whitney.* One of the brothers who made history with their abstract films, here deals with the abstract still image in mutation. THE NON-OBJECTIVE EYE *by Sydney Rawson.* Pure design distilled from daily surroundings. THE ACTION OF WATER and SIMPLE FUGUE *by John R. Baxter.* Two contexts for the photographic image in sequence: that of content and that of design. HOUSE *by Charles Eames.* A film, constructed from slides, by a man who has deeply influenced the vision of the modern world.

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PLEASE NOTE:

1. Due to unavoidable program conflicts, it has been necessary to change dates for the series as announced in the Museum Calendar for May; and there will be four programs instead of five.
2. Performances will begin at 8:30. For their own enjoyment and that of others, patrons are urged to *be on time!*
3. Substitution of other films for those announced may occur due to conditions beyond the control of the Museum.
4. ART IN CINEMA has been a copyright name since 1947. It is not to be confused with other showings in the Bay Area or elsewhere, those in collaboration with the University of California Extension Division.

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA

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